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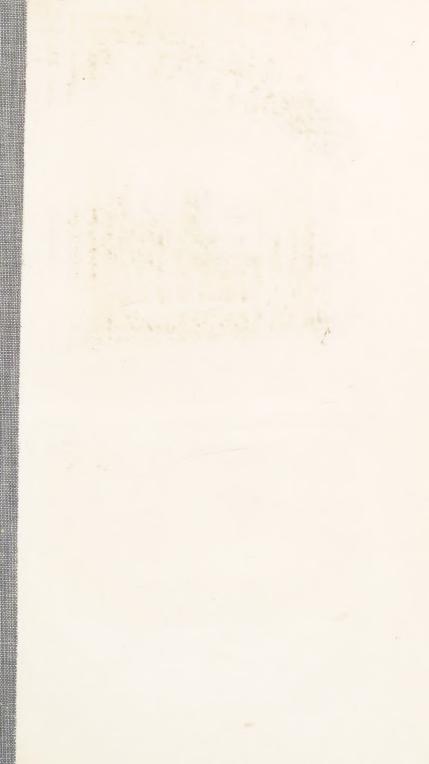
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Eugene Aug! Hoffman 1857.



SERMONS

ON THE

PRINCIPAL EVENTS AND TRUTHS

OF

REDEMPTION.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,

AN ADDRESS AND DISSERTATION ON THE STATE OF THE DEPARTED, AND THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL.

BY

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SERMON I.

JESUS CRUCIFIED, BURIED, RISING FROM THE DEAD.

[ON THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.]

PSALM CXXVI. 3.

The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

THE world witnessed, in three successive days, events of infinitely greater moment than any that occurred, or than can possibly occur, through the periods of its duration—Jesus Christ was crucified—Jesus Christ was under the dominion of the grave—Jesus Christ rose from the tomb.

These are the events which the Church, at this sacred season, has been commemorating.

Events, with which we are familiar, lose in a degree their power to affect us. It is serious and continued reflection alone that can present them to us with all the force and liveliness which are due to their intrinsic importance, and to the interest which we may have in them. But, unless there be some powerful impulse arising from

the relation which these events bear to our worldly prosperity or happiness, they may pass through our minds like the shadow that glides over the scene of the morning.

On what other principles can we account for the fact, that events so sublime, awful, and momentous as the crucifixion, the sepulture, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ—events in which we have the greatest possible interest, involving as they do, our eternal destiny, fail to occupy, as they ought, our most serious attention? We are familiar with them; we have heard of them from our childhood; and unconnected as they are with those objects of time and sense which engross us, they do not stimulate us to that serious consideration of them which is necessary to impress them upon our minds.

But, my brethren, to withhold from truths of infinite importance that reflection and attention which may be necessary to enable us to discern and to feel their value, is dishonourable to us as rational creatures, whose intellectual and moral powers ought always to be exercised upon events and truths with an earnestness proportionable to their worth and dignity. What truths of greater moment than the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the Son of God! And what truths impose upon us higher obligations of gratitude, obedience, and love!

Redeemed by these great events from a spiri-

tual thraldom, infinitely more grievous than the bondage to which the Jews were subjected by the haughty tyrant of Babylon, we have infinitely more reason to exclaim than they had at their deliverance from their temporal captivity—" The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

That this may be the language dictated by the lively impulse of gratitude, let us now devote a short time of serious reflection to the "great things" which God hath done for us, in the events of the present season of devout commemoration—

Jesus our Lord crucified.

Jesus our Lord under the dominion of the grave Jesus our Lord rising from the dead.

I. Jesus our Lord crucified.

Worldly pride may tauntingly ask; and a sceptical philosophy repeat the question—What is there great in the death of one who was crucified as a malefactor, and who lived the scorn of men, and the outcast of the people? Are we to seek for the evidences of his greatness in his own obscurity and poverty, and in the obscurity and poverty of his associates; in the reproach, the ignominy, the buffetings and scourgings which were inflicted on one who terminated his career in a death the most ignominious that could be inflicted? But was there nothing great in the signs and wonders and mighty works by

which Jesus of Nazareth rose from the obscurity and meanness that surrounded him, and from the cloud of suffering that enveloped him, and delivering truths the most sublime and important, and precepts the most pure and exalted, proclaimed himself a teacher sent from God.

Yes, Jesus Christ was great through the whole course of a humble and suffering life. Stupendously great in its closing scene. The *circumstances*, the *manner*, the *design* of his *death*, distinguished it with all the marks of greatness.

Never was a death paid by any of the human race, at which there was darkness over the whole land; at which the earth quaked; and the rocks were rent; at which the graves were opened, and the dead arose and appeared unto many!

Never did an innocent victim of malice and persecution, submit to the ignominious and cruel inflictions of his enemies, with that meekness and patience which distinguished him, who, when he could have called to his rescue legions or angels, or by a word struck to the earth his vengeful enemies, testified his forbearance in the meek language of submission—"thus it must be;" and even in the bitter agonies of a death which his enemies had inflicted, was more solicitous for them, than alive to his own sufferings; and poured forth for them the prayer "Father, lay not this sin to their charge; forgive them, for they know not what they do." What majesty,

what tenderness, and what piety in that closing scene of his life—"It is finished—Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit" "He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Even from the hardy soldier who guarded him, burst forth the exclamations of sympathy and of admiration—"Truly, this was a righteous man"—"Truly, this is the Son of God ^a."

But if Jesus was great in the circumstances and manner of his death, with much propriety may we affirm that he was great in reference to the objects which that death accomplished. It was an illustrious exhibition of patience, of calmness, of forbearance, of meekness, and of dignity, such as had never been displayed by the boasted sages or the renowned heroes whose only trust was the principles of human wisdom, and whose only strength the force of human resolution. It was a proof of the sincerity which had dictated his numerous acts of benevolence, and prompted his beneficent and holy instructions and precepts. And in no inconsiderable degree it tended to strengthen the evidence which the purity and excellence of his doctrine, as well as the signs and wonders and mighty works he had wrought afforded, of the dignity of his mission. But these were ends that his death might have accomplished, had he possessed only the nature which

Matt. xxvii. 54.

thus exposed him to suffering. There was an object achieved by his death infinitely exalted and interesting, and which was accomplished in consequence of the union, with that frail nature, which suffered and expired, of the power and nature of the Godhead. Jesus Christ though expiring in ignominy on the cross, mysterious as it may seem, was the Eternal Son of the Father, "God manifest in the flesh"." And his death therefore effected that which sinful human nature so urgently demanded, but which the death of no human victim could accomplish—it made "a full and sufficient oblation, atonement and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world."

The death of Christ has thus rendered more illustrious that holiness, which, purer than the Heavens, could not look on man but with abhorrence until his sins were washed away in the blood of atonement. It has afforded to the innumerable orders of created intelligences, to angels, and to man, a tremendous display of the inflexible severity of that justice which demanded the punishment of transgression, and turned not its sword from a victim of divine dignity. It exhibits to a guilty world, the awful terrors of that divine indignation which sin had roused, and which was appeased only in the dying agonies and intercessions of the Lord of life. And it has

b 1 Tim. iii. 17.

made to shine with a lustre over which justice can cast no cloud, that mercy which willing not the death of a sinner, now beholding full atonement made for his sins in the death of that Holy One, on whom were laid the iniquities of mankind, extends pardon to all the penitent, however enormous their transgressions or aggravated their guilt.

II. Jesus crucified, passed into the tomb, and was subject to the dominion of the grave.

Here his enemies beheld, as they supposed, the completion of their designs, in the utter destruction of this innocent object of their hatred and persecution. A stone is rolled to the door of the sepulchre-the seal of the Roman Governor which it would be death to violate is placed on the door —and the lifeless remains which this sepulchre contained, were guarded by a band of soldiers, from all the efforts of that affectionate zeal, or that supposed imposture, which might attempt to steal them away. Jesus, dead, buried, guarded in the sepulchre! But, Christians, faith opens this sepulchre to your view. The sacred body which it contains sees no corruption. Pure and fresh, it awaits its reunion with the immaculate soul, that but for a short period is separated from it. And that soul loses not for a moment its activity. It descends to the place of the departed where the spirits, who, in the ages preceding, had been separated by death from the bodies that had

seen corruption, abide in darkness and woe, or in the light and bliss of Paradise. Into this holy receptacle of the blest, the soul of the Saviour enters; leading as he promised to the same place of joyful repose, the penitent companion of his dying agonies, the thief who suffered with him. Into Paradise the Saviour entersand proclaims, to the spirits of the holy saints', who, through his merits, slain as he was from the foundation of the world, are kept, not in a prison of bondage or woe, but of safety and of blissful rest, that their redemption is effected—that he has triumphed over sin, expiating it by his blood -that he has vanquished death, nailing it to his cross-that he is going to consummate the glorious victory, by rising from the grave, the earnest of their resurcction, and by ascending to Heaven, to prepare there a place for them. Joyful message to the holy spirits of the departed. The Saviour himself bears to them the tidings of the glorious destiny which awaits them. Blissful as is the Paradise where now in humble hope they enjoy the divine favour; more blissful is that Heaven to which the Saviour assures them they shall be translated. Joyful the tidings-that the grave shall deliver up their bodies—that corruption shall restore its victims-and that "changed into bodies fashioned like unto the glorified body and of their Lord and Master, they shall for ever be with him in the heaven of bliss.

III. Of all this, of the truth of all his declarations, promises and threats, of the reality of all our hopes, we behold glorious and irresistible evidence, in—Jesus *rising* from the tomb.

Yes, on the morn of the resurrection, that sun, whose beams had been hid in the darkness of the tomb, burst forth with a lustre that shall never more be clouded, and commenced a course in which he shall never more set. Jesus, our Lord, rose, surrounded with divine splendour; and with him rose for us new, and exalted, and immortal hopes.

He rose—and proved that he was not a blasphemer, when he said that he was equal with God—that he was not an impostor, when he announced that his Father had sent him into the world—that he was not a deceiver, when he testified, that though the Son of Man should suffer, and be crucified, the third day he should rise from the dead. Invested with all power in Heaven and in earth, Lord of the living and the dead, holding the keys of death and hell, so that he opens and none can shut, and he shuts and none can open, he rose from the tomb, not as he descended into it, the crucified malefactor, the helpless victim of malice and persecution, but "the Head of his Church," the Ruler of the kingdoms of the world,

d Philip. iii. 21.

the Lord of lords. What a change is this—from the darkness and ignominy which surrounded the man of sorrows, to the splendour and power that encircle the Lord of Glory! Jesus is proved to be "the Son of God, with power, by his resurrection from the dead"—Great things he hath done.

Great things hath his resurrection done for us. He rose to assure us of the most important blessings; to impose on us the most exalted duties; and to inspire us with the most elevated hopes.

He rose to assure us that he, who was once a suffering Saviour, subject to the power of his enemies, and unable, to human appearance, to save himself from death, has now become a Redeemer, mighty to save.

He rose to assure us, that the atonement, which, by pouring forth his soul unto death upon the cross, he had made for our sins, is accepted by his Almighty Father as all-sufficient and availing.

"Delivered," as he was, "for our offences, he rose for our justification"," to assure us that, for all our sins, there is fulness of pardon—that, guilty and obnoxious as we are to wrath, through his propitiation we may be made the subjects of the favour of God, who is "reconciling us unto himself, not imputing unto us our trespasses and sins"—that, as the Author and Finisher of our redemption, he might send to us that Holy Spirit, who, by his miraculous gifts, was to establish his Church,

^e Rom. i. 4. Rom. iv. 25. [#] 2 Cor. v. 19.

and by his animating power to preserve it, and who is to be the agent of our sanctification, and the source of consolations through whose quickening power we die unto sin, and live unto God.

To impose on us these sacred duties is another principal object of his resurrection.

The impressive lesson which it teaches us, is, that, in the language of the Apostle, "like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life b." He died to expiate our sins—he rose to redeem us from their power. He died to rescue us from spiritual bondage; he rose to assert his dominion over us, that, as the people whom he hath redeemed, we should "live, not for ourselves, but for him who died for us, and rose again i." He died to teach us that we must be crucified with him, that "the body of sin must be destroyed k," that we must be transformed, by dving unto sin into the likeness of his death-And he rose to teach us, that dead to our former sinful pursuits, we must live to him; that leaving, as it were, in the tomb, into which, with him, we descend, the polluted garments of the old man, we must put on the splendid apparel of the "new man, which, after him, is created in righteousness and true holiness¹;" and, from the darkness and corruption into which sin had plunged us, we

^b Rom. vi. 4. ^j 2 Cor. v. 15. ^k Rom. vi. 6. ^l Eph. iv. 24.

should rise to newness of life. "He died unto sin once ";" but he rose, and liveth unto God, conducting and advancing, by his intercession and grace, that spiritual kingdom, which God hath established, and of which he is the ruler and Head; and thus enforcing on us, that as his disciples, for whom he both died and rose again, we should count ourselves "dead unto sin, but alive unto God through him ";" living a life of holy obedience, from a principle of supreme love to that God, who gave his only Son to die for us, and for us raised him from the dead. He rose, that he might ascend to the throne of dominion, at the right hand of the Father, being "crowned, for the suffering of death, with glory and honour "." And he thus teaches us, that if we are risen with him—if we profess to embrace those hopes, and to enjoy those blessings, which his resurrection unfolds, we must "set our affections on things above", "continually aspiring after the holiness and felicity of those heavenly mansions, which our divine Redeemer hath gone before to prepare for us, and where he will dwell for ever.

To inspire us with these hopes, that we might be animated to these duties, was a principal object of Jesus our Lord in rising from the tomb.

Then he evidenced, in fact, what he had before declared, "I am the resurrection and the life"."

m Rom. vi. 10. n Rom. vi. 11. o Heb. ii. 9.

^p Col. iii. 2. ^q John xi. 25.

Vested, after his resurrection, with the office of Judge of quick and dead, he assures us that he will come to "give to every man according as his work shall be'," and that to his faithful followers he will "appear with salvation ." "They who believe in him," it is his own unfailing declaration, "shall never die '.' He "the first born from the dead "they are the brethren whom he will afterwards bring unto glory. He is "the first fruits of them that sleep "-they are the harvest who will afterwards be gathered into the mansions of rest. He is "the forerunner"—they will follow after, "within the vail," into the holy of holies, eternal in the Heavens. He is the Captain of their salvation they are the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, who, with the crowns of honour and the palms of triumph, shall evermore ascribe praises unto him, through whom they have conquered'. We are "begotten to these lively hopes by the resurrection of Christ from the dead a."

Jesus your Lord was crucified. Humble and penitent souls be glad—for by the sacrifice of his cross he hath wrought your redemption—he hath blotted out the sentence of condemnation against you b—he hath purchased your peace.

Jesus your Lord passed into the grave. Descend by faith with him, Christian, and be glad. For

^a Col. i. 18.
^b Heb. ix. 28.
^c John xi. 26.
^d Col. i. 18.
^e 1 Cor. xv. 20.
^e Heb. vi. 19, 20.

² Rev. vii. 9, 10. ² 1 Pet. i. 3. ^b Col. ii. 14.

There you behold your Saviour blessing, by his presence, the place of the departed, where in hope and felicity your spirit shall abide, till the day when it shall be called forth to assume the garments of immortality and glory, and to ascend to the Heaven of Heavens, where God dwells. For,

Jesus your Lord, Christians, rose from the tomb, and thus affords you the pledge of these glorious hopes—the hopes of bliss unspeakable, and without end—of our "corruptible putting on incorruption, and our mortal immortality"—of being united to "the spirits of the just"—of being "for ever with the Lord"." "The Lord hath done great things for us, let us be glad."

^{° 1} Cor. ix. 25. Heb. xii. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 17.

SERMON II.

THE VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST.

1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the triumphant declaration with which the Apostle concludes a perspicuous and animated view of the doctrine of the resurrection. That "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept," is the exalted truth which in all its important consequences he illustrates and defends with great strength of argument; and finally exhibits, as affording to the Christian, the most exalted consolations—" For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written—Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting, O Grave, where is the victory?" The causes which

give to death its power, and the means of triumph over them, which the Christian enjoys, are then stated in the words of the text—"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

My brethren, we are all subject to the law, to sin, and to death. The nature of the dominion which they exercise over us, and the means of victory afforded us by Jesus Christ, are therefore inquiries in which we are all interested. The text suggests the order in which the subject is to be viewed.

I. In what respects is "sin the sting of death?"

II. In what respects is "the law the strength of sin?"

These are the inquiries which will prepare the way for pointing out,

III. The mode by which "God giveth us the victory over them through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I. In what respects is sin the sting of death.

1. Because it is the cause of death.

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Death was the penalty annexed to transgression—"In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Alas! the offence was committed, and the penalty followed. Man, made immortal, and placed in the paradise of God, to enjoy his Maker's presence and his Maker's bounties, but for transgression would

never have known death. Well therefore may sin be said to be the sting, since it is the cause of death.

But sin is not only the cause of death; it is that which clothes it with all its terrors. The pains which death occasions the body; the agonies attending the separation of the soul from her mortal tabernacle are indeed severe. But these do not constitute the hitterness of death. These could be borne with composure, even with triumph, were it not that the soul is wounded by sin. If the conscience were at peace; if there were no transgressions for which an account must be rendered at the tribunal of her judge; if the soul were pure from the stains of sin, and fitted to enjoy the presence of her Maker; if she could contemplate only joy and bliss awaiting her in the new state of being on which she was to enter; what would be death, but a translation to scenes of more exalted enjoyment. How little then should we regard those pains and agonies, soon terminating in joys that would know no end, in the perfection both of body and soul for ever. But, ah! brethren, when the pangs of death are to be borne by a wounded spirit, and to be encountered by a conscience oppressed with guilt; then it is that death is terrible. When in the midst of the agonies that attend the rending of the soul from the body, the sinner calls to mind his iniquities, looks back on a long

series of transgressions, looks forward to the righteous tribunal of the God whom he has offended; beholds divine wrath impending over him; and that bottomless pit where the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever, opening to receive him; then it is that death is terrible; then it is that, to escape this second death, he would call on the rocks and mountains to cover him. It is sin which occasions these terrors; which excites in the conscience fearful apprehension of the wrath of God; and which quickens "the worm that never dies, and kindles the fire that never shall be quenched." The agonies of death could be borne but for those terrors with which sin has armed him. sting of death is sin.

- II. And what gives sin this tremendous power? We are answered in the words of the text, "The strength of sin is the Law." The law may be considered in a two-fold signification; of the moral law, to which men are universally subject, and of the law imposed by God upon the nation of Israel. In both these significations it may be said that "the law is the strength of sin."
- 1. The moral law is the strength of sin. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. The principle upon which this assertion is founded is obvious,—" where there is no law, there can be no transgression"." Without the law, sin is dead"." The

^{*} Rom. iv. 15. * Rom. vii. 8.

moral law, to which all men are subject, requires perfect obedience, an obedience which in no instance falls short of the demands of the law; which in no instance omits the duties which it enjoins, or practises the things which it prohibits. Perfect unsinning obedience is required by the very nature of law. To suppose that a law permits its injunctions to be disregarded, would be contradictory and absurd. By the very nature then of the moral law, perfect obedience to all its injunctions is required of man. This obedience is also exacted by the lawgiver. He is God over all, the fountain of being and felicity, holy and just, infinite in goodness as supreme in power. He possesses therefore an immutable claim to the perfect homage and obedience of man. His power enables him to demand this homage and obedience. His holiness and goodness give him a right to do so. The distinction between good and evil is as essential and eternal as his own nature; and it is not possible that he can view with favour any of his intelligent creatures who disregard this distinction. God is holy, and man must be holy, or he cannot be acceptable to a holy God. Both the nature of the moral law then, and the perfections and authority of the lawgiver, exact perfect obedience to its injunctions. And what are these injunctions?-To love God supremely, to fear him constantly, to glorify him with our bodies and our spirits that are his; to practise, universally and strictly, those virtues of justice, fidelity, sobriety and purity, which are required by the infinite perfection of his nature, and necessary to the perfection of our own. What then is the situation of man? Reason, conscience, teach him that he is subject to a law which requires unsinning obedience. And yet there is not a moment of his life when he does not fall short of its claims—in which he does not, in many things, offend; and offending, become obnoxious to punishment. "The law then is the strength of sin." It enjoins duties, which through the frailty of our nature we are unable to perform; it prohibits offences, which we are constantly committing; it subjects us to punishment, to the awful displeasure of that holy and just Being whom we are bound supremely to serve. Will we cherish the hope of pardon? Shall we trust that a merciful God, commiserating the frailty of our nature, will not be strict to mark our offences? Admitting that this hope is reasonable in respect to the sins of infirmity, to the imperfection of our services, it will not apply to our wilful transgressions; and of such we are guilty. But whence do we derive this hope of pardon? Not from the moral law; for it is the very nature of law to know no mercy; to follow the offence with the penalty. Do we derive it from the perfections of the lawgiver? Alas! when we are seeking a

refuge in the mercy of our Heavenly Father, justice interposes and demands our punishment, the holiness and authority of God enforce her claims; and, in the moment when certainty only could afford us consolation, we are overwhelmed with the distressing doubt, how God can be just and justify the sinner.

The moral law then is the strength of sin. It gives man the knowledge of sin. Requiring a perfect obedience, which man, through the frailty of his nature, is unable to render, it subjets him to the *power*, and to the consequent *punishment* of sin. And it provides no means of escape from either the power or the punishment. The assurance, and the means of pardon, must arise from an express revelation of the Almighty Lawgiver.

And, perhaps, this assurance is contained, these means are provided, in the revelation which God made of his will by his servant Moses. Perhaps man, condemned by the moral law, will find mercy in that proclaimed to the people of Israel. Alas! this law established all the precepts of the moral law. "This do, and thou shalt live"," is its injunction. Perfect obedience is still required. And it confirmed the penalty of disobedience. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them"." By adding to the precepts of the moral law a number of positive institutions, and ritual objectives.

^c Luke x, 28. ^d Gal. iii. 10.

servances, the neglect or infraction of which was an offence against the law, and against the authority of the Lawgiver, it even increased man's liability to transgression, and, of course, to punishment. Expiations, indeed, for sin, it provided; but these had no efficacy in themselves. "It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin "." In this respect the "law was only a shadow of good things to come, only a schoolmaster to bring men to Christf." All its sacrifices derived their efficacy solely from their reference to the one great sacrifice to be offered by Christ, that lamb without blemish, and without spot; and in virtue of its merits, solely, were accepted. The Jewish law, then, while it confirmed the precepts and claims of the moral law, and even added to it many positive injunctions, like it, demanded unsinning obedience; and, like it, made no provision, in itself, for the pardon of transgression. The law was still the strength of sin. Here then, O man, is thy lamentable condition-subject to a law which enjoins universal holiness, and demands perfect obedience; continually violating this law, and falling short of its claims, and thus becoming subject to sin; obnoxious, on account of sin, to temporal death, the prelude to eternal death, everlasting woe. Wretched man that thou art, who shall deliver thee? "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

[·] Heb. x. 4.

- 111. This glorious victory, which our Lord Jesus Christ enables us to obtain over the law, over sin, and over death, was the last point to be considered.
- 1. And as sin and death derive all their efficacy from the Law, from the violation of which they both spring, the victory over it must first be achieved. Accordingly, our glorious Redeemer hath made us free from the law, and placed us under a new dispensation, the covenant of grace. By the sovereign and merciful appointment of his heavenly Father, becoming our representative, he rendered that unsinning obedience demanded both by the law, and by the authority of God; but which we were unable to render. He sustained, in our stead, that penalty of transgression required both by the authority of the law, and the holiness and justice of its Author; which penalty we had incurred. Thus satisfying the claims of the law, and the authority of the Lawgiver, he became the Author of everlasting salvation to all those who believe in him. God, in Christ, was pleased to establish a covenant of grace, which, instead of an unsinning and perfect service, accepts sincere, though imperfect obedience. Its language is not, "This do, and thou shalt live;" and, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them." It proclaims terms of acceptance, which all men can render. "Re-

pent, and thy sins shall be forgiven "."—" Believe, and thou shalt be saved "."—" Patiently continue in well doing, and thou shalt inherit everlasting life"." Thanks be to God, who thus giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. And this victory is not only over the law, but over *sin*.

Incomplete, indeed, would have been the victory, had it extended only to freeing us from the penalty of the law, and from its rigorous demands, and left us still liable to the guilt and to the dominion of sin. For it is a truth eternal and unchangeable as God himself, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord: and yet as there is no man that liveth and sinneth not, there is no man who is not liable to the guilt of sin. Jesus Christ hath obtained for us therefore the victory over sin. He has made expiation for it; and through faith in his blood we are cleansed from its guilt. "He was made sin for us, (that is, a sacrifice for sin) who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him k".

And not only hath he freed us from the guilt of sin, but from its dominion.

He hath *unfolded*, in a most clear and perspicuous manner, the will of God, enlightening our understandings by express precepts, often repeated and inculcated; and appealing to our Acts iii. 19. Acts xvi. 31. Rom. ii. 7. 2 Cor. v. 21.

imagination and hearts by parabolic and figurative instructions. And he hath rendered our duty still more clear, impressive, and affecting, by the exhibition, in his own spotless life, of all the graces and virtues which he inculcated. Not only hath he enlightened us in our duty, but enabled us to perform it; and thus completed our victory over sin. For the conditions of our acceptance are no longer unsinning obedience, absolute holiness. Through his gracious mediation, obedience that is sincere and persevering, however imperfect it may be, is accepted. Through his gracious mediation, the following after holiness-following after it with the utmost vigour and perseverance, of which our frail nature is capable, and the consequent attainment of it in the bent of our affections towards God, and the general conformity of our life to his commands, are accepted, instead of that rigorous and absolute holiness which the law demanded. And these conditions of acceptance, thus mitigated, he enables us to perform, through the quickening and sanctifying power of his Holy Spirit. Insufficient of ourselves, our sufficiency is of him; and "his strength is made perfect in our weakness!." This Holy Spirit, which "transforms us by the renewing of our minds;" and "creates us anew unto good works," and enables us to abound in "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,"

¹² Cor. xii. 9.

and all its other holy fruits, is granted to our earnest supplications, is conveyed through the sacraments, and ordinances, and ministrations of his Church, which as "his body" he animates with its life-giving power. And every sinful passion this Holy Spirit enables us to subdue in that degree which is necessary to our deliverance from the bondage of sin; -every virtue this Holy Spirit enables us to acquire in that degree which is necessary to our establishment in holiness;every duty this Holy Spirit enables us to discharge, so far as is necessary to constitute us the accepted disciples of our Lord and Master;and from every temptation this Holy Spirit enables us to escape; so that "in all things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us."-" Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world "." "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And this victory he gloriously completes by enabling us to triumph over death. There shall indeed be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and unjust. From temporal death all men are finally delivered. The redemption is co-extensive with the penalty. For "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"." But the unjust are raised, with bodies incorruptible and immortal, only to be made subject to the

^m Eph. i. 23. ⁿ 1 John iv. 4. ^o 1 Cor. xv. 22.

awful penalty of the "second death;" to be plunged into that "lake that burneth for ever and ever P." They, on the contrary, who hear the word of God and keep it; they who hearken unto the commands of God, and in their lives obey him; they who overcome, shall not be hurt of this second death. It is the glorious declaration of our blessed Lord-"I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die "." To this divine Redeemer "all power in heaven and earth" is committed: "God hath put all things under his feet, and made him to be head over all things to his Church "." He, our glorious head, is raised from the dead; and where he is, there shall we, his members, be also. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation'."-Then shall be "redeem them from death, he shall ransom them from the power of the grave "."—" Death shall be swallowed up in victory." "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thanks be to God, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"." He hath freed them from the rigorous demands of the law; he hath redeemed them from sin; he hath ransomed

^p Rev. xx. 10. ^q John xi. 25. ^r Eph. i. 22.

Heb. ix. 28. Hos. xiii. 14. Rom. viii. 1.

them from death and the grave-and they shall live with him for ever. Great then must be the guilt of those, who, instead of returning thanks to God for the unspeakable gift of his son Jesus Christ, reject the salvation which he hath wrought for them. Ye despisers of God and of his Son, are ye heedless of your soul's immortal interests? Cheat ye yourselves with the hope, that there is no eternity-or that in that eternity there is no punishment for you? Listen for a moment to the voice of reason and conscience—they will teach you that transgression involves guilt; that guilt must be punished; and that of all guilt, that is the most beingus which arises from sins committed against the Maker and Judge of heaven and earth. Trust ye then your salvation to the moral law ?—It speaks no mercy—it exacts perfect obedience—it dooms to punishment all who in any degree violate it. Trust ye in the hope of pardon, inspired by the compassion and mercy of God?—What confidence have ye that these hopes will not prove delusive?-Oh! when God himself in his Son Jesus Christ proclaims mercy to you, reject not his voice-spurn not him who teaches you the way of access to your offended God; who proffers you not the uncertain hope, but the assurance of mercy-for "Christ also suffered for your sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring you to God "."

Christ hath redeemed us from the law. Let us not hence conclude that the law is made void. that we are freed from its obligations. "Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid'." Jesus Christ came "not to destroy the law, but to fulfily." He hath indeed redeemed us from "its awful curse, eternal death—he hath placed us under a covenant of mercy, in which sincere, though imperfect, is accepted instead of perfect and unsinning obedience. But this covenant of grace, instead of making void the moral law, enforces all its precepts in the utmost purity and power-commanding us to be pure as God is pure, to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect; to follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. But this covenant. of grace unfolds the hope of which the law knows nothing, that "if any man sin, he hath an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous 2."

But let us remember that Jesus Christ hath given us the means of victory over sin. We live under a dispensation, which in the most clear and impressive manner enforces our duty; which in the sacrifice of the Son of God displays the infinite evil of sin; and which offers to each one of us grace to escape from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. If we continue in sin with this display of its enormity, with these means and motives to forsake

^x Rom. vi. 1. ^y Matt. v. 17. ² 1 John ii. 1.

it, what can we expect but the severest punishment that insulted justice and contemned mercy can inflict. Be not deceived—"they that continue in sin are the servants of sin;" and such have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Let us then devoutly adore the justice and holiness, the goodness and mercy of God, as displayed in the victory which he hath given us in our Lord Jesus Christ. His justice and holiness are displayed in the establishment of a law which required unsinning obedience, which allowed no transgression, which remitted no punishment, which exacted every penalty, though his only Son was the victim. The riches of his goodness and mercy are displayed in the pardon, the grace, the everlasting life which he offers us through Christ Jesus the Lord. He was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" and through the efficacy of his blood, the sincere and pious, who lived under the dispensation either of the law as proclaimed by the light of reason, nature, and tradition, or as delivered to the Jewish nation, were accepted; however imperfect their obedience, however inadequate it might be to the rigorous claims of the law.

Finally—let us devoutly thank God, who hath not only given us the victory over the law and over sin, but over death—over death temporal and eternal. Yes—thanks be to God. Jesus Christ

hath "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through his Gospel." Thanks be to God,—"when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory "—"we shall be with him, for we shall see him as he is." Why then, O my soul, dost thou tremble at the approach of death? Terrible, justly terrible indeed, are the pains and agonies of dying, of leaving the world and all thou dost hold dear, and entering on an untried scene. But look by faith to thy Redeemer—stay thyself upon him—He will conduct thee through the grave and gate of death to a joyful resurrection.

And "sorrow not, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, as those that have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"." "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law—but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

^b Col. iii. 4. c 1 Thess. iv. 14.

SERMON III.

JUSTIFICATION.

Romans iii. 24.

Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

THE transgressors of human laws, subjected to the avenging sentence of a human Judge, would inquire with eagerness concerning the means of escaping punishment, and listen with solicitude and with transport to the tidings of pardon. Brethren —we are all transgressors of the laws of the Sovereign of the universe. We have violated the commands of Him, whose authority over us is supreme, founded on his power, and guided by his wisdom and his goodness. We are exposed to the penalties of a law proclaimed by this dread Sovereign, and denouncing woe eternal on its violators. Our condemnation has passed the lips of the Almighty Judge-and our sentence is-"indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" -" the worm that never dies-the fire which is

never quenched." With what eager solicitude should we inquire—what shall we do to be saved?

Our release from condemnation, and our restoration to favour, are acts of the unmerited goodness, and the voluntary mercy of God. For in the language of the text—we are "justified freely by his grace."

- I. What is the nature of our justification?
- II. Who are the agents in it?
- III. What is its meritorious cause?
- IV. What are its conditions?
- V. What are the external means of its conveyance?

These are the inquiries which will afford a full view of this important subject *.

As our justification involves interests of infinite moment, it is not to be viewed as a speculative inquiry. It should excite our warmest feelings, and engage our most vigorous and patient research.

I. What does our justification imply?

It is a term taken from legal proceedings; and it implies an accusation; and an acquittal, or a

^a Rom. ii. 8, 9. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

^{*} This subject is discussed with admirable clearness and precision in a treatise by Dr. Waterland. The Lord Bishop of Llandaff has rendered an essential service to the interests of religious truth, by the republication of the works of this eminently learned and orthodox divine; and by an interesting view of his life and comprehensive analysis of his writings.

pardon; a declaration of innocence, or a remission of guilt, restoring the pardoned offender to full favour. The accusation that meets man at the bar of his judge, is-his having transgressed the righteous laws of his Maker; and thus defied the authority, and justice, and contemned the goodness of his Almighty Sovereign and gracious Benefactor. Against the sentence of condemnation, man has no plea to urge. "All have sinned "-" every mouth should be stopped "-"all are guilty before God;" and therefore all are exposed to his just wrath. Here interposes mercy; and at the moment, when the criminals at the tribunal of Heaven were convicted of rebellion against their Maker and Sovereign, and the sentence of destruction going forth against them, they are justified—their sins are cancelled; their punishment is remitted; they are restored to favour.

II. Who are the *agents* in the justification of sinful man?

Behold engaged in it the adorable Godhead.

"God the Father, so loving the world"—
a guilty and condemned world, "as to give his
only begotten Son, that the world through him
might be saved i," "laying help on one who is
mighty, exalting one chosen out of the people—
commending his love towards us, in that while

c Rom. iii. 23.

we were yet sinners, he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us; rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, to redeem us who were under the law, to give us eternal life, according to the exceeding riches of his grace, justifying us." Blessed then be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us and chosen us in him, reconciling us to himself by Jesus Christ.

Behold too, engaged in the work of our justification, God the Son; saying to his Almighty Father, "Lo I come to do thy will; assuming the body prepared for him, made a curse for us, enduring for us ignominious sufferings and death; giving himself for our sins; delivered for our offences, and raised for our justification. Blessing and honour therefore be unto him, that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood f."

Behold too, the agency of the Holy Spirit in our justification—that "Spirit which maketh intercession for us; by whom we have access unto the Father; whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption ^g." Behold then, in the Father

See Rom. viii. 32. Rom. iii. 25. Eph. i. 7. 2 Cor. v. 19. &c. &c. &c.

^f See Heb. x. 2 Cor. v. 21. &c. Rom. iv. 25. Rev. i. 5.

See Rom. viii. 26. Eph. ii. 18. Eph. iv. 30.

devising, in the Son executing, in the Holy Ghost completing, the plan of salvation, the agency of the adorable persons of the Godhead, in the justification of the sinner.

III. What is its meritorious cause?

What is it which procures to man this exalted benefit? By his transgressions he had forfeited the divine favour, and become obnoxious to divine wrath. Can his own works, his own performances, merit pardon, or procure a reinstatement in the blessings which were forfeited? Then indeed he would have cause to glory. No -his own works, even were they so pure as to sustain the scrutiny of divine holiness and justice, can neither merit pardon for the past, nor procure favour for the future. They are only the service which he is bound to render; the debt of gratitude which is due to the Author and the Benefactor of his being. But alas! man's best performances are stained with imperfection. Man's most holy works need repentance. Not then by works of righteousness are we saved. "By the deeds of the law," saith an inspired Apostle, "can no flesh be justified "." An atonement for man's transgressions appears necessary to vindicate the justice of God, and to establish the authority of the divine government. This atonement was made by the sufferings and death of the Son of God in

h Rom. iii. 20.

the person of man. And the obedience of Christ, by his suffering the penalties due to our sins, and by his fulfilling all righteousness, God is pleased to accept as the propitiation for our sins; and on account of the righteousness of Christ, to restore us to his favour. Thus then "we are justified freely by his grace." The righteousness of Jesus Christ is the meritorious cause of our justification. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ'." "He was made sin for us; who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him '." "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life 1." "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses and sins "." But.

IV. What are the *conditions* of our justification?

This surely is a most important inquiry. God of his free grace and mercy hath provided for us pardon, salvation, everlasting life. But to bestow these blessings on us unconditionally, even while we continued unbelieving and disobedient, while we persevered in rejecting his authority, and in violating his laws, would be utterly inconsistent with his perfections as the Governor of the Uni-

i 1 Cor. iii. 11.

k 2 Cor. v. 21.

¹ Rom. v. 18.

m 2 Cor. v. 19.

verse, and with our character as moral agents; and impossible in the nature of the thing. For the unbelieving, the disobedient, the unholy, cannot be the subjects of the favour of a just and holy God, nor qualified for the joys of his presence. Unconditionally indeed, and without any agency, still less without any merit of our own, did he devise a plan for our justification, and provide for us the means of restoration to his favour. For "God commended his love for us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us"." Freely "by his grace are we justified, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ "." But the justification thus procured without any agency of our own, must be suspended on something to be performed by us; or God is no longer a moral Governor, nor man a moral agent, placed in this world to work out his salvation. While then the righteousness of Christ is the meritorious, the procuring cause, FAITH is the condition, the only condition of our salvation. "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him "." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on himthat sent me," said our blessed Lord, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life q." "The Gospel of Christ," said an inspired Apostle, "is the power

^{*} Rom. v. 8. * Rom. iii. 24. P Heb. xi. 6. 4 John v. 24.

of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth "." "By him, Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Prince and Saviour, all that believe are justified "." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness "We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law"."

But what is the nature of this faith which justifies? Does it exclude good works? God forbid that we should thus make void the law. God forbid that we should lessen or destroy the obligations of that holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord"." Good works, equally with faith, are excluded as the meritorious cause of our justification. For in this sense, we are justified only by the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But they are included in faith, as the condition of justification; because, as the Apostle James declares, "faith without works is dead." "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"."

The faith therefore which justifies, is, in the language of the Apostle Paul, a "faith working by love","—in the language of the Apostle James, a "faith co-operating with works, and thus by works made perfect"." There is therefore no

r Rom. i. 16. SActs v. 31. Rom. iv. 5.
Rom. iii. 28. Heb. xii. 14. James ii. 30.

² Gal. v. 6. ² James ii. 22.

contradiction between these Apostles, on this subject of the condition of man's justification. St. Paul declaring taith to be the only condition, and excluding the deeds of the law, means that " faith which worketh by love," which is lively and operative, which is made perfect by works; and the deeds of the law which he excludes, are not those evangelical works which proceed from a true and lively faith, but those works which are opposed to the Gospel,—"works of law," which are not wrought through faith, and which are rested on as the meritorious cause of our acceptance. The Apostle James, insisting on good works as necessary to justification, means not those works of the law which St. Paul excludes, but works wrought through faith. And when he also affirms that we are not justified by faith only, he has in view not the true and lively faith, a faith working by love, which St. Paul lays down as the sole condition of salvation, but that faith which is "dead, being alone"."

The faith then which justifies, is such a persuasion of the truth of the promises and of the will of God, as leads to a humble reliance on the one, and a sincere obedience to the other—"a faith working by love," and "by works made perfect." The essence of this faith consists in a sincere disposition to know and to do the will of God; and thus is an act of the heart as well as of

² James ii. 17.

the understanding; for "with the heart," saith the Apostle, "man believeth unto righteousness"." And this faith justifies not as a meritorious cause, (this is the free grace of God in Jesus Christ,) but as a condition—that, without which, the justification procured for us by the sufferings and obedience of Christ, will not be effectual, will not indeed be applied to us.

But this faith, as a condition of justification, operates differently, according to the different states and circumstances of men. As it has for its object the promises and the will of God, it must vary in different men, according to the opportunities which they enjoy of knowing those promises and that will. Faith in a certain degree, and to a certain extent, is indispensable to salvation; "for without faith it is impossible to please God; "and "by faith man is justified, and not by the deeds of the lawd." But to exclude from salvation, and to consign to perdition all those who have never had an opportunity of believing in Jesus Christ, is utterly repugnant to reason, incompatible with the character of God as the just and equitable Governor of his intelligent creatures, and absolutely contradicted by Scripture. For there the declaration is (a declaration just as well as merciful), that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is ac-

cepted with him." "There is no respect of persons," saith the Apostle, "with God. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." Jesus Christ was "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" rendering salvation possible, through his merits, to all mankind. He was that promised seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed with the means of justification and eternal life.

The faith therefore which justifies, the same in all persons as to its spirit, consisting in a sincere persuasion of the truth of the promises and will of God, leading to reliance and obedience, is various as to its degree, and the extent of the objects on which it is exercised. In the Patriarchs it consisted in a firm belief in the various promises of mercy which God made them, and particularly the promise of the Messiah; and in a firm belief in all his commands, followed by humble reliance and obedience. In God's chosen people, justifying faith consisted in a belief in that promised Messiah, whom all the rites of their law prefigured, by whom Judah and Israel were saved. The faith required of those to whom the Gospel is proclaimed, consists particularly in that belief in Jesus Christ, as the

Acts x. 34, 35. Rom. ii. 11. 14, &c. John i. 29.

Son of God and Saviour of the world, which produces humble reliance on his mediation, and unfeigned submission to his precepts. And the faith required of those to whom the dispensation of the Gospel is not revealed, is confidence in the Supreme Being, and obedience to his will, as far as his attributes and will are made known to them, either by the light of nature or by tradition derived from revelation, or by the secret inspirations of his grace.

Thus while the spirit of justifying faith remains the same, a sincere desire to know and to do the will of God, the truths which it is required to receive, differ according to the light and knowledge which men enjoy.

But where the Gospel is revealed, there the great object of faith is the mediation of Jesus Christ. And this mediation is the only meritorious cause of the justification of men in all ages and under all dispensations.

The last inquiry which was proposed, is,

V. What are the external means through which justification is conveyed by the Holy Spirit?

This inquiry can have respect only to those to whom the Gospel is revealed.

External means are instituted, through which justification, on his exercising true and lively faith, is conveyed to man. These are, the word, the ministry, and the ordinances of the Church, the body of which Christ is the head, and emphatically the

Saviour"; which he "sanctifies" and to which "the Lord added the saved."

When man, perusing the sacred Scriptures, "believes from the heart unto righteousness"," the truths and promises there contained, the word of God becomes the mean of his justification.

When, by the ministry of reconciliation, faith is quickened, strengthened, and rendered productive of good works, then the *ministry* becomes the channel by which justification is conveyed.

But the ordinances are the principal means and pledge of this holy grace. By baptism, on our professing sincere faith, we are placed in a justified state, that is, in the language of the Church, "called unto a state of salvation"." According to the declaration of the Apostle—"As many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death ""—that is, not only into a profession of his laws and doctrine, but into a conditional participation of the merits of his death *.

Hence, in the language of all the Apostles in their epistles, baptized Christians are addressed as "called," as "elected," into a state of salvation. It is in this sense that baptism is styled

^h Eph. v. 23.
ⁱ Eph. v. 26.
^j Acts ii. 47.
^k Rom. x. 10.
ⁿ Rom. vi. 3.

^{*} Rom. x. 10.

* "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, have the full efficacy of Christ's death sealed up unto us, and by virtue thereof die unto our sins."—Bishop Hall.

"the washing of regeneration," as distinct from "the renewing of the Holy Ghost"." Regeneration, and renovation then, are terms of distinct signification. By regeneration is meant, our being born again into a new, a justified state, in baptism; that is, a state in which we are conditionally entitled to the blessings of salvation. And renovation, or "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," means that change of heart and life, through the operations of the Divine Spirit, which is necessary finally to secure to us the privileges of our baptismal justification. The Apostles do not call on baptized Christians to be regenerated, but to "be transformed by the renewing of their mind p," and thus to "make their calling and election sure 9:" to secure the blessings of that state of salvation or justification into which they are called by baptism. And thus our Church, while in all her services she considers baptized Christians as "regenerated," as "called into a state of salvation," as made "members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven," prays that they may be "renewed by God's Holy Spirit;" and exhorts them to "die unto sin, and to rise again unto righteousness," that they may finally secure the privileges of their justification, may inherit God's everlasting The error would be fatal which would kingdom.

Titus iii. 5. PRom. xii. 2. 9 2 Peter i. 10.

suppose that no other spiritual change is necessary than that which takes place in baptism.

On our exercising true and lively faith, the justification, received in baptism, is assured to us in the ordinance of *Confirmation*, which is a pledge to those who, in faith, ratify their baptismal vows, of God's grace and favour. And this justification is constantly renewed and preserved by receiving, with lively faith, the symbols of the *body and blood of Christ*.

Behold then, intelligible to the humblest capacity, the whole process of our justification, of our being accounted righteous before God.

Our justification must be ascribed to the free grace of God the Father, who is pleased to accept of the rightcousness of his Son Jesus Christ, as an atonement to his offended justice. This rightcousness is the meritorious cause of our justification. Faith—consisting in a sincere disposition to know and to do the will of God; which disposition, where the Gospel is promulgated, must be evidenced by submission to all its truths and precepts, and humble reliance on its promises, particularly the promise of pardon through the blood of Christ—is the condition of justification. And the Holy Ghost, by the word, the ministry, and the ordinances, conveys this justification to true believers, and renews and confirms it to them.

How great then is the error of those, who contend that good works are, in no sense, neces-

sary to justification. All works, indeed, are excluded, which are not evangelical, which are not wrought through faith; and faith, equally with works, is excluded as the meritorious cause of our justification; which must be referred solely to the free grace of God, through Jesus Christ. But the faith by which we are justified, is " a faith working by love;" a faith, so sincere and lively, that it brings forth all the fruits of righteousness. Thus, then, good works are included in that faith which justifies as the principle from which they proceed. And therefore, though in the language of our Church, they "follow after justification," after we are accepted by God, on the exercise of a true and lively faith; yet, as our Church also affirms, they are "the fruits of faith, they spring necessarily from it ';" and wherever they do not exist, we may conclude, there is not true and lively faith; and, of consequence, not that faith which justifies.

If good works, then, are necessary to our justification, why are we said to be "justified by faith only?" Obviously, because faith is the principle from which all good works must proceed. We cannot obey God, until we believe in his existence, his attributes, and his will; nor can we rely on the righteousness of Christ, as the

only meritorious cause of our acceptance, and serve him as our Lord and Master, until we believe in his character and divine offices. Excluding then both faith and good works from all meritorious agency in our justification, and accepting pardon and salvation as the unmerited gift of God, through his Son Jesus Christ, we exclude all boasting, and give to God the supreme glory.

Adore then, Christians, his infinite love, displayed to mankind through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. "God," said the Apostle, "is the Saviour of all men';" rendering salvation possible to all who, in the humble and submissive spirit of faith, according to the lights which reason, which conscience, which traditional revelations, which the secret inspirations of God's Spirit afford, worship and serve him, "in whom they live and move and have their being." But God is "especially the Saviour of them that believe." They who are justified by faith in the blood of his Son, possess the peace of a conscience cleansed from guilt, the joy of a spirit purified from sin, the hope of an everlasting inheritance of glory-blessings which, in his inscrutable wisdom, he withholds, in this life, from the worshippers of his name, according to the feeble lights which reason sheds upon it.

Praise then your God, O Christians, for his infinite love, in justifying you "freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" for giving you peace, sanctification, everlasting life. These are blessings conditionally conferred upon you in baptism, when, made members of his body, you became partakers of his merits; and, as our Church declares, were "called into a state of salvation."

All Christians, admitted into the Church or kingdom of God in baptism, are the elect of God. There is no election of individuals to everlasting life. The election, set forth in Scripture, is that of portions of mankind to the privileges of being God's people, in visible covenant with him. In thus conferring his spiritual favours in the present life, the Sovereign of the world "worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will';" "having mercy on whom he will have mercy";" distinguishing, with the revelation of his will, and with his covenanted grace, certain portions of mankind, while the rest are left to the light of reason and nature. Thus, of old, the Jews are called, in Scripture, God's elect ". And yet surely it will not be pretended that all the Jews were absolutely elected to everlasting life. And thus, now, the whole body of Christians, all the members of the universal Church, all who are admitted by bap-

^t Eph. i. 11.
^u Rom. ix. 18.
^w Is. xlv. 4. &c. &c.
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tism into Christ's kingdom on earth, are called God's elect. The Apostles, in their epistles, addressing the whole body of Christians, in certain places, call them "saints," "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;" "predestinated to the adoption of children;" " justified and sanctified "." And surely it cannot be supposed, that the whole body of Christians, who were thus addressed, were certainly elected, and predestinated to everlasting life; and that they could not forfeit their adoption, and fall from their justification and sanctification. On the contrary, these very Christians, thus elected, thus predestinated, justified and sanctioned, are exhorted to "make their calling and election sure;" to "see that they receive not the grace of God in vain;" to "take heed lest they fall;" "lest a promise being made them, of entering into God's rest, any fall short, through unbeliefy." This scriptural view of predestination, our Church sets forth in her 17th Article. The justification, then, which Christians received in baptism, being a conditional justification, will only prove external and nominal, unless they preserve it by that true and lively faith, which only bringing forth good works, finally justifies.

See, then, how great are your privileges; and

^{*} Philip. i. 1. 1 Peter i. 2. v. 13. Eph. i. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

5 2 Peter, i. 10. 2 Cor. vi. 1. 1 Cor. x. 12. Heb. iv. 1. 11.

how great is your danger of forfeiting them. The important inquiry is-have you a true and lively faith; a faith, vigorous in its principle; holy in its effects; universal, through the Divine Spirit, in its conquests over temptation and sin? Pursue this inquiry seriously, faithfully, without delay. Oh! delude not yourselves, where error may prove fatal to your immortal interests. "Without Christ, God is a consuming fire 2." Happy, transcendantly happy are ye, if you possess that faith, which is a vigorous principle of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord "." Justified by this faith, you shall have "peace with God;" " his fatherly hand will ever be over you; his Holy Spirit will ever be with you; and led in the knowledge and obedience of his word," you shall rejoice in the hope of the glory that "With Abraham, with Isaac, shall be revealed. and with Jacob;" with patriarchs and prophets, and holy men; and all the nations of the justified, of every age, and every nation (blissful prospect), "you shall sit down in the kingdom of God." And the joyful subject of your contemplations and praises, for endless ages, shall be-the grace by which you were made partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.

[•] Heb. xii. 29. • Heb. xii. 14.

SERMON IV.

MAN CAN HAVE NO MERIT BEFORE GOD.

LUKE XVII. 10.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

My text is the conclusion of a parable in which a servant is represented as performing for his master the things which were commanded him, without, on this account, deriving merit or being entitled to thanks. The moral of the parable and its application to Christians is contained in the text—"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." We have not done any thing by which we have actually profited God, so that we have any absolute merit or can claim any reward.

This then is the doctrine enforced in the text. Man can have no merit in the sight of God. And I propose,

I. To explain this doctrine.

II. To prove it. And

III. Lastly, to state its practical results

I. The explanation of the doctrine.

Is it impossible then that man can possess merit? Are not virtuous performances meritorious? Does not the universal language of mankind, which is no fallacious evidence of truths that are founded in the reason and nature of things, assign merit to certain actions and individuals? To assert that this language is incorrect, that in reality there can be no merit in man or in his deeds would not this be to confound vice and virtue, and to detract from the lustre of those Benefactors of nations, who now shine forth in the page of history, and command the applause of the world?

It is necessary, in order to obtain correct ideas on this subject, that we ascertain in what merit, strictly speaking, consists.

Merit consists in doing something by his own power, which entitles the agent, on the ground of the performance, to reward.

There are certain senses in which men may be said to possess *relative merit*.

They may possess merit when compared with on.

Thus, the righteous man, he who does his duty in the station in which Providence places him, who seeks by every mean in his power to

promote the welfare and happiness of his fellow men, who fears and who serves the God who made him, and who endeavours to regulate all his conduct by the divine laws, possesses merit, is entitled to commendation and reward, when compared with the wicked man, with the selfish, abandoned sinner, who has no object but the gratification of his passions, and who in the pursuit of this object, violates the laws both of God and man. The one is the object of execration and of punishment; the other of applause and This is the judgment which we pronounce, when we compare them with each other in reference to the principles which regulate their conduct, and to the effect of those principles on themselves and on the world.

But there is also relative merit among good men. He whose goodness is more pure and elevated than that of others with whom he may be compared, whose conduct is more strictly conformed in all respects to the dictates of virtue and the law of God, may be said to possess more merit than others. And his merit will be enhanced by the temptations which he has encountered, by the sufferings which he has sustained, and by the difficulties which he has overcome, in rising to those heights of virtue which he has attained.

Nor do we deny that virtue is deserving of praise and of reward. Virtue consists in acting agreeably

to that law of perfect purity and goodness which proceeds from the Divine Author of all perfection; and considered in itself must be praiseworthy, and it must be fitted in its own nature for reward.

In reference also to the terms of the covenant of the Gospel, man may be considered as doing what may entitle him, through grace, to commendation and reward. God has placed man under a merciful dispensation, in which he offers him everlasting life, through the mediation of a Saviour, on his exercising faith, and attaining holiness; for which purpose divine strength and grace are bestowed upon him. "Believe and thou shalt be saved "."—" Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven b."-" Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life "-A right conferred by God's grace, and founded on his promise. They therefore who by the aids of the Divine Spirit comply with the terms of this covenant, become entitled, in virtue of God's promise, through the mediation of a Redeemer, to everlasting life.

Still, we assert, that, though man has thus relative, he can have no absolute merit in the sight of God. No services which he performs can

Acts xvi. 31. Mat. vii. 21. Rev. xxii. 14.

possibly impose an obligation on God to reward him. He cannot do any thing which on the ground of the performance, independently of the covenant of grace in the Gospel, can entitle him to favour or to reward.

This is the proposition which I now proceed to prove.

II. The *proofs* of the truth that man has not any absolute merit in the sight of God—any thing which on the ground of the performance, independently of the covenant of grace in the Gospel, can entitle him to favour or reward, may be drawn from the following considerations.

He is a *creature* dependent upon God who made him.

He is a sinner, obnoxious to God's justice.

His redemption is only by the blood of Christ.

His good works are wrought only through divine grace.

They are at best *imperfect*, and cannot stand the scrutiny of divine holiness and justice.

1. Man can have no merit, can perform no good works which can entitle him to claim reward, because he is a creature dependent on the God who made him.

It is a first principle resulting from the very nature of the relation which subsists between them, that a creature cannot claim any thing from its Creator on the ground of absolute right. Every thing that the one possesses is given by the

other. All possibility of absolute merit is thus excluded. Shall a creature deriving every thing that he possesses from his Creator claim merit and reward at the hands of that Creator! The supposition involves a gross absurdity. Whence has man derived the endowments on which he boasts himself? From God his Maker. By whose power are those endowments preserved in exercise? By the power of his Almighty Sovereign. And shall man presume to claim reward for his performances on the ground of their absolute merit from that very Being whose creating and preserving power brought him into existence, sustains him in life, and preserves in vigour those faculties by which he lives and acts? The claim would be as impious as it is absurd.

But again.—For the gift of his being, man has incurred a debt of gratitude, which will for ever exclude all claims to absolute merit. In proportion to the excellence of his endowments, and of his gifts, of his capacity for high attainments, and noble and magnificent deeds; is the return of gratitude due to Him who has thus elevated him in the scale of being. Those splendid performances then on which he would erect his claim to merit, only add to his debt of gratitude, and thus destroy this claim. No possible services on the part of man can be an adequate return for the goodness of his Creator, in the gift of a Being but little lower than that of the

Angels, capable of rising to almost equal heights of knowledge and felicity, and destined, not only with angels, but with God himself, to be blessed and happy for evermore.

2. The absurdity of the claim to merit appears still stronger, if we consider that man is a sinner,

obnoxious to God's justice.

He has wilfully transgressed; he has incurred the penalty of wilful transgression; and is subject to God's just displeasure. A sinner talk of merit! A criminal at the bar of eternal justice—the sentence of wrath issuing against him, lay claim to reward! O God! it is of thy mercy that he is not consumed.

3. Man's claim to merit is destroyed by the fact, that his redemption is only through the blood of Christ.

"Ye are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ^d," is the language of the Apostle, and "there is salvation in no other." But if there is merit, why should there be redemption? Redemption implies a state of guilt and bondage, for deliverance from which there is a price paid. But if man could claim reward on the ground of absolute merit, he must have been capable of freeing himself from this state of guilt and bondage, of paying himself the price of his redemption. Why then should so great a price have

d 1 Peter i. 19.

been offered as the sufferings and death of the only-begotten Son of God? Man's utter destitution of merit is written in the blood of the cross. Look to that blood, O man—that blood of infinite value, which flowed as the price of thy redemption, and humbled in the dust, withdraw every plea of merit.

Man's redemption by the blood of Christ, in another point of view, establishes the impossibility of his meriting reward. "God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life f." Contemplate the value of the gift, and the dignity and glory of the person who thus submitted to sufferings and death.—Consider also the guilt and unworthiness of man, for whom these sufferings and death were sustained. What a debt of gratitude is due from him! Shall we then boast of meriting reward, when the devoted services of our whole life, the pure and exalted services of eternity, cannot repay the love of that God, who so loved us as to give for us his only-begotten Son; or the love of him who died for us, and who washed us from our sins in his own blood ?" Unto him, and unto him alone, through the ages of eternity. will the host of the redeemed, casting their crowns at his feet, ascribe all worth, all honour and glory.

4. The absurdity of man's claiming reward for even his best performances, on the ground of absolute merit, appears, from the consideration that they are all wrought through the power of divine grace.

Man's relation as a creature exercising all his powers in dependance upon God, leaves him without any claim to merit from that Being who made him, and who upholds him in existence. But his character as a fallen and corrupt creature stamps still greater weakness on his natural powers, and still greater absurdity and impiety on his claims to merit. This, strictly speaking, can only exist in an independent being performing services not due, by his own underived powers, without any external assistance. But man not only derives his natural powers from God, but weakened and depraved in those natural powers, he must look to God for that supernatural strength which alone can raise his fallen nature to a capacity for resisting temptation, for subduing his sins, and for rendering acceptable obedience to the divine law. It is a truth which lies at the very basis of the scheme of redemption, and which reason, acknowledging his weakness and depravity, confirms, that man "cannot do good works, pleasant and acceptable" to a pure and holy Being, "but by the grace of God giving him a good will, and working with

him when he has that good will." All his claims to merit then vanish. What one person performs through the aid of another, can never constitute merit in him. Man's best works, wrought through divine grace, exciting the first emotion of good desire, prompting the resolution of performance, furnishing him with strength to bring the resolution to good effect, overcoming the difficulties and the temptations that would have frustrated the performance—man's best works thus begun, continued, and finished, constitute no ground for glory—except to that God of all grace and goodness, by whose inspiration and by whose aid, they have all been performed. "Let no flesh glory in his presence "."

5. But even if they were the fruits of man's underived and independent powers, they could not claim merit or reward, because they are at best imperfect, and cannot stand the scrutiny of divine holiness.

Acts of obedience, in order to have any pretensions to merit, must not fall short of the demands of law—they must fully answer its requisitions. And the deed must not only be entirely conformable to the standard of law; it must be performed from principles and motives strictly pure and correct. Where is the individual who, on this ground, would offer pretension to merit?

h Articles of the Church, X. 11 Cor. i. 29.

Where is the man who does not, in some things, offend: and whose best performances are not, in some degree defective, in the act, as well as in the principle and motive? Let us examine our own conduct, my brethren; let us search our own hearts. Is our conduct, in all respects, conformed to the requisitions of the divine law? Are even our best performances wholly free from the stains of error and imperfection? Are the motives and principles, that have prompted and regulated them, perfectly pure and correct? Is there one virtue which, without apprehension, we would have scanned by a pure and holy God? Ah! with our daily errors, with our daily deficiencies, perhaps, with our daily transgressions, with our services, principles and motives, stamped with imperfection, shall we appear at the throne of God, most just and most holy-lay our claim to merit, and stand the scrutiny of his holiness and his justice? There is dread in the thought there is blasphemy in the suggestion. "God be merciful to me a sinner," is the language which we should pour forth. "We are unprofitable servants-deal not with us, O Lord, according to our deserts."

This sentiment of deep humility, is one of the most important practical results of the doctrine—that man can have no absolute merit in the sight of God. And it is with a view to

III. Its practical results,

That I have endeavoured to impress this doctrine upon you. Perhaps there are few, if any, who would seriously and soberly maintain that they can have such absolute merit as to lay God under the obligation of rewarding them for their services. But there is a wide difference between a vague and general acknowledgment of our destitution of merit, and such an enlightened, thorough and lively conviction of it, as will lead to those important practical results which it is designed to produce.

This doctrine should excite in us a deep and lively sentiment of *humility*.

We have not any thing which we have not received from God—and for the possession of which we are not dependant upon him. We cannot do any thing but by the exercise of those powers which he preserves in existence and in vigour. Is it possible, that thus dependant, we can pride ourselves on any of our performances?

But still further. We are sinners, subject to the sentence of eternal death. From this sentence we are redeemed only through the blood of Christ. His merits are our protection from the penalties of the law which we have transgressed. What deep humility becomes guilty creatures, ransomed from destruction!

We are so frail and corrupt that all our ability to do that which is good comes from divine grace.

What is there in us then that can be a ground for boasting?

Even our best performances are so imperfect that they need forgiveness; that they can be accepted only through the rightcousness of the great Mediator. These, which alone could afford any plea of merit, fail us—"We are unprofitable servants."

Constantly then bear in mind, brethren, your weak and dependant condition, as the creatures of God's power; your still more weak and humble condition, as the redeemed subjects of his grace; and thus cherish the sentiments of deep humility. Let this humility be displayed, not in professions, but in the meekness and gentleness of your tempers, in the lowliness and tenderness of your deportment and conduct. Professions of humility, of an utter vileness and demerit, greater than comparatively with some others they ought, in truth, to impute to themselves, are often made by those whose tempers and conduct contradict their professions. Let yours, then, I repeat it, be the humility of temper and of conduct, and not of loud profession. Be ever ready, indeed, on proper occasions, to disclaim all merit, and to declare, that your hopes of acceptance are fixed only on the cross of Christ. In your intercourse with your God, acknowledge, that to his unmerited goodness, to his free grace, you owe all-all that distinguishes you, as men—all that exalts you, as Christians. Thus humbling yourselves, you shall be exalted. Thus ascribing honour to God, he will honour you before men, before angels, in his kingdom, for ever.

Let the consideration of your utter unworthiness, and demerit, lead you continually to your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for his intercession, and for his grace.

By this intercession alone you can be accepted; by this grace alone, quickened and strengthened for all good works. This is the mode which God hath appointed for your salvation. We are sinners, obnoxious to God's justice. In ourselves, we have no merit that can either atone for the past, or procure acceptance for the future. Our only hope of pardon and acceptance must be placed on the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us then habitually reflect on our unworthiness, and on the imperfection of our best services, that we may habitually rely on the atonement and intercession of our great Mediator. We can be justified, we can be pardoned, we can be accepted only by faith in him; only by his merits, received by faith k. On him must be all our dependance. God's mercy, through his merits, we must continually implore. When rejoicing in our best deeds, in the brightest testimony of our conscience,

k Rom. iii. 24, &c.

the language of our hearts should be-Blessed be thy mercy, O my God, who, through my Saviour's merits, will accept and reward the imperfect services which, in themselves, have no claim to thy notice or regard. In every conquest over temptation, offer up the humble and grateful acknowledgment-Blessed be thy grace, O my Saviour, through which I have vanguished. In the habitual sense of your weakness and insufficiency, lift up your souls in the ardent supplication—Guard and strengthen me, O my Saviour, and keep me from falling. In the prospect of the hour of death, and the day of judgment, fortify vourselves by the prayer of faith—Thou wilt be with me, my Advocate, my Redeemer; and in death, I shall be fearless—in judgment, I shall stand.

Let the sense of our demerit also *suppress all* murmuring or repining, under disappointment and sorrow.

The least of our blessings is more than we merit—the severest of our sorrows less than we deserve. Consider thy unworthiness, Christian; thy numerous imperfections and offences; and bless that gracious God, who still crowns thee with many mercies, above thy deserts, and withholds calamities that would be the just punishment of thy sins.

And, finally, adore and serve him with all the powers of your souls, with the devoted obedience of your lives, for that exalted goodness,

which hath prepared for you, undeserving as you are of the least of his mercies, the glories of etcrnity.

These are infinitely more than the uninterrupted, the undivided, the perfect service of your whole lives could merit. But to reward services, imperfect, feeble, alloyed by sin, with the glories of his heavenly kingdom, with a happiness pure as his own felicity, and lasting as eternity; this is indeed goodness, which surpasses the understanding of man to conceive, or his heart suitably to celebrate. And yet, what can we offer thee, O our God, but the best homage of our heartsthe best service of our lives. When we have done all. we shall be unprofitable servants; and to thy grace in Christ Jesus, thy unmerited goodness, we must ascribe our acceptance, our felicity. And thy grace, thy goodness, shall, through eternal ages, occupy the homage of our souls, and inspire their praises.

SERMON V.

WALKING BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.

2 Cor. v. 7.

We walk by faith, not by sight.

This is the great characteristic which distinguishes true Christians from the children of this world. The latter are influenced solely by the scenes around them; by the principles of reason and of nature as opposed to faith, to those truths which God has revealed in the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ. All their views are fixed on the objects which the world presents to them. All their efforts are directed to the attainment of its wealth and honours and to the enjoyment of its pleasures. Every calculation is made with reference to their worldly prosperity and happiness. In the formation of their character, and in the direction of their conduct, they are influenced only by the dictates of corrupt reason, or the impulses of sensual passion. And all that they principally hope, and all that they practically fear, are

confined within the limits of the present transitory scene. They "walk by sight."

Not so with genuine Christians. Enlightened by that Gospel of Jesus Christ, which they have cordially received as "the power of God unto salvation;" influenced by those glorious truths which it reveals, by those exalted promises by which it awakens their hopes, and by those awful threats by which it arouses their fears; and under the guidance and control of that Divine Spirit, by which they are redeemed from error and from sin; they habitually look beyond "the things which are seen" and temporal, "to the things which are unseen and eternala." Their principles, opposed to the corrupt maxims of the world, are those holy principles of love to God and regard to his authority, which the Gospel enjoins as the supreme principles that should regulate every other. The objects that engross their attention, are not the wealth, the honour or the pleasures of the world; but the treasures of heaven, the honours which God bestows, the felicity which will endure for ever in his presence with whom is fulness of joy. Their aggrandisement, their advancement, their enjoyment here, are concerns which they habitually place infinitely below "those good things which God has prepared for those who love him b," and with which they are not worthy of a moment's comparison.

² 2 Cor. iv. 18.

To gain even the whole world, would in their estimation be an act of the highest folly, if attended with the loss of their souls. And if their immortal interests could not be secured but with the loss of the world, the deprivation of its treasures, its honours, and its enjoyments, those objects for which they who live only by sight think life desirable, they would not for a moment hesitate to make the sacrifice. Their treasure is in heaven. There are their thoughts and their affections. Towards heaven their exertions are supremely directed. "They live by faith."

Brethren—to which of these characters do we belong-to the dominion of which of these opposite principles are we subject—whether we live by sight, or by faith, is an inquiry of infinite moment. For by the reason and nature of things, as well as by the decree of God, they who living by sight are devoted solely to "the things which are seen and temporal," having their portion only in this world, will perish with that world which they have chosen as their portion. While they who, living by faith, have directed supremely their thoughts, their affections and their exertions to "the things which are unseen and eternal," when the world and those devoted to it shall be swept away by the breath of God's displeasure, will enter on that "new heavens and new earth" wherein dwell that righteousness

c 2 Peter iii. 13.

which they have sought, and those joys which will be the consummation of all their desires, and the full bliss of their immortal natures. In profession indeed every Christian lives by faith. But—alas—practically how many even of professing Christians, never rise to those divine and spiritual scenes to which faith is designed to elevate them—but confine their principles, their views, their hopes, their fears, their exertions to temporal and worldly objects—and walk by sight.

That we may be impressed with the folly and the guilt and danger of this conduct, let us contrast, in various important particulars—*The effects of living by sight, and by faith*, with regard,

I. To the end of our being.

II. To its character.

III. To its condition.

IV. And to its destiny.

Let us contrast the effects of walking by sight and by faith, in respect

I. To the end of our being.

Regarding only the suggestions of sense, how greatly should we mistake in this important particular. He who walks by sight, who disregards the views which faith affords him of the end of his being, considers it as consisting only in the gratification of his passions, in securing his prosperity and enjoyment in the world. His character as a spiritual and accountable creature, bound to glorify, by the service of his life, his bene-

ficent Maker, enters not seriously into his thoughts. and forms no part of his calculations. These are all directed to the means of advancing his temporal felicity, and of securing those worldly objects, which possess the highest place in his estimation. The things that are above the world, the spiritual realities of a future and eternal state of existence, are lightly regarded. They never form the subject of his contemplations, never interest his feelings, or influence his conduct. Laving up treasure upon earth, he considers as the end of his being, and the sum of his happiness. And while his supreme efforts are directed to the attainment of those objects that gratify only the inferior powers of his nature, and to a provision for the wants and enjoyments of his weak and perishing body, the salvation of his soul, that momentous concern which should transcend in his thoughts and exertions every other, is forgotten, neglected, or postponed.

How different the character of him who walks by faith, who regulates his views and his conduct by those truths and principles which the Gospel proclaims. He considers it as the end of his existence, to glorify, by the devoted service of his life, that adorable Being who hath ranked him so high in the scale of creation; who hath endowed him with all those capacities which qualify him for the attainment of temporal happiness, with those high and vigorous powers that fit him for

spiritual exercises, for the service and enjoyment of the infinite source of felicity; who preserves his frail nature from the numerous assaults to which it is exposed; who bestows upon him, in bountiful profusion, innumerable enjoyments; who hath rescued him from sin and misery by the sufferings and death of his only begotten and beloved Son; and who, through the merits and grace of this Son, remits the penalties of his offences, restores him to the favour which he had forfeited, and prepares for him those glorious and immortal felicities, that perfection of virtue and enjoyment, which though they are the reward of his obedience, infinitely transcend the merits of his best performances, as they exceed his comprehension and his hopes. Habitually regarding the present life but as the threshold of his existence, he directs his views to that eternity in which his destiny is to be fixed in felicity or woe. And considering every thing that ministers to his prosperity and advancement here, to the gratification of the desires and appetites of his corporeal nature as inferior and sometimes even corrupting objects of pursuit, he devotes his supreme efforts to a provision for the wants of the imperishable principle within him, to securing the salvation of that soul which is destined to live for ever, and which will be the subject of happiness or misery, when the busy scenes and noisy pleasures that in the world engage and attract, are dark and

silent as that grave to which they have descended.

II. The effects of walking by sight, and not by faith, with regard to the character of our being.

He who regulates his views of himself only by the suggestions of self-leve and the dictates of a corrupt reason, considers himself as comparatively pure and perfect. He does not acknowledge or feel that he is subject to the dominion of sin, and obnoxious on account of his actual transgressions to the just displeasure of God. He regards the indulgence of the corrupt propensities of his nature, as sanctioned by the powerful impulse which urges him to the gratification, and by the pleasure which the indulgence affords. The character and effect of his vicious indulgences, as opposed to the holiness, and forbidden by the commands, of that God to whom he is accountable, as involving him in guilt, and rendering him obnoxious to punishment, occupy no share of his thoughts. Or, if his character as a sinful and guilty creature be admitted, the extent to which he is subjected to the dominion of sin, its evil and malignity as opposed to the holiness, violating the authority, and abusing the goodness of God; and the degree of his guilt in the actual transgressions which he hath committed, are not fully and correctly appreciated. The views which the Scripture unfolds of man,

as at enmity with God "through wicked works", as unable of himself, without the influences of divine grace, to purify his corrupt nature, and to render to God an acceptable service, are revolting to his pride, and therefore rejected, or only partially felt and acknowledged.

But these are the views most deeply felt and cherished by him who lives by faith. The corrupt propensities of his nature, which prompt him daily to indulgences and actions offensive to God and forbidden by the divine laws, he feels, acknowledges, and deplores. The evil of sin, in all its consequences with respect to the authority, the holiness, the justice, and the goodness of God, and to the purity, perfection and happiness of his own nature, he fully admits, and seriously contemplates; and under the sense of its enormity, and of his own subjection to it, the most solicitous object of his attention is, the means of deliverance from its guilt and dominion.

On this momentous subject of the means of release from the guilt of sin and of the pardon of transgression, what satisfaction can be obtain who lives only by sight? What assurance can reason and nature afford of the mode and conditions of pardon? Is a merciful God prompt to forgive? Yes: but a holy God must view sm with indignation; a just God must punish iniquity; the righteous Governor of the world must

preserve his moral government, and cannot permit his laws to be violated, nor his authority to be contemned with impunity. How then can the holy, the just, the righteous Governor of the Universe forgive sin, remit the penalties incurred by the wilful infraction of his laws? Would not pardon, even on repentance, in licensing crime by absolving it from punishment, oppose his holiness, violate his justice, and subvert his authority? Here to say the least, reason and nature are perplexed; and he who consults only their dictates and suggestions, who walks only by sight, must be in darkness and doubt as to the momentous inquiry, how God can be just, and yet justify the sinner.

This inquiry does not perplex or agitate him who walks by faith. He beholds it luminously answered in the cross of Christ. There it is that "mercy and truth meet together;" that divine holiness is displayed and established by the infinite dignity and perfection of him who expiated God's displeasure against sin; that the divine justice is vindicated by him, who infinite in his nature, paid in man's nature, the satisfaction which that justice required; and there the divine authority is maintained in executing to the uttermost on an all-perfect victim, the penalties of a violated law. God is just, God is holy, God is the righteous Governor of the world; and yet God in mercy forgives the penitent sinner. Oh!

what opposites are reconciled by the cross of Christ-the punishment of sin, and the pardon of the offender! What a mystery is resolved by the cross of Christ—the display of his holiness, the vindication of his justice, the preservation of his authority: and yet the boundless exercise of his mercy! The cross then is the object of wonder, of love, of confidence to him who walks by faith. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christe," is the language which evidences his profound sense of the exalted display of all the divine perfections which it affords, and of the precious benefits which it assures to him. Not in the sighs of his contrite spirit; not in the tears which the sense of guilt calls forth; not in the confessions by which he laments his unworthiness; not in the supplications by which he implores pardon; not in the resolutions by which he pledges himself to renounce sin, and to serve his God; not in those holy works by which he carries his resolutions into effect, does he place his hopes of pardonthese are founded only on the merits of him whom God hath set forth as a propitiation for sin. And while he who walks only by sight is perplexed by doubts as to his acceptance, or deludes himself by a false dependance, faith in the blood of Christ removes every fear from the soul of the contrite believer, and fills him with holy

e Gal. vi. 14.

joy by the inspiring confidence, that God through Christ has reconciled him unto himself.

Trusting to the strength which nature affords, what assurance can he have who walks only by sight, of deliverance from the dominion of sin? Can he hope to expel from his bosom the unholy desires and passions whose sway is so firmly established there; to fix in his soul, the spiritual and holy graces and virtues that are so contrary to its corrupt propensities; to change the habits of sin, for those of holiness, the ways of ungodliness, for those of righteousness-Can he hope to perform a work the difficulty of which is aptly denoted in the "Ethiopian's changing his skin and the leopard his spots'," by the unassisted efforts of his own mind-by his own resolutions, so changeable—by his own strength, so feeble? To him who feels the dominion of unholy passions and the force of sinful habits, and has experienced the inefficacy of his best resolutions and efforts to subdue and to change them, what consolation and encouragement in the confidence which faith inspires, that the grace of a divine Sanctifier will be sufficient for him, the strength of a divine Guide made perfect in his weakness ?? While he who walks only by sight, who trusts for his victory over his sinful passions only to his own efforts, remains subject to their dominion; he who walks by faith, who habitually looks for

Jer. xiii. 23.

the means of his spiritual triumph to the grace of Christ strengthening him, finds that by this grace he can overcome the world, beat down Satan under his feet; and obtain "the glorious liberty of the sons of God"."

III. But—in contemplating the condition of man. as subject to temptation, to sorrow, and to death how great the superiority of him, who walks by faith, and not by sight.

To withstand the assaults of temptation, of that "lust of the flesh," which kindles unhallowed fires; of that "lust of the eye," which allures by innumerable fascinating pleasures; of "that pride of life"," which, fixing on the objects of wealth and honour, excites in the soul insatiable cupidity and lawless ambition—to withstand these—these that have mastered their thousands and ten thousands—alas, how impotent the resolutions of the stoutest bosom—the efforts of the strongest mind! How ineffectual the exertions of him, who walks only by sight, who looks for strength to resist only to reason, to nature, to the world!

But what victories has not faith wrought—what lusts of the flesh have been too violent for faith to quench—what pleasures have been too seducing for faith to resist—what temptations of wealth and ambition have been too powerful for faith to overcome? Walking by faith, ani-

h Rom. viii. 21.

mated by the holy principles which it inspires, and aided by the Divine strength which it confers, the Christian has crucified the flesh; has destroyed the body of sin; has renounced pleasures, dear as a right hand or a right eye; has despised the wealth of earth, in comparison with the treasures of heaven; and has counted the highest honours of the world but as dross, in comparison with the honour of being a son of God, and the heir, with Christ, of immortal glory.

Under the experience of *sorrow*, what is the consolation of him who walks only by sight? His spirit within him is desolate, and darkness covers the scenes around him. Reason and nature afford no light that unfolds the end to be accomplished by his afflictions; no means of escape from them; no consolations to cheer and support him under them;—he sorrows, and alas! as one "that hath no hope."

But walking by faith, how changed his views and feelings, even though unchanged his lot. He regards the world but as a state of trial, and sorrow as the means of fitting him for the rest which is beyond it. Over the troubled scene through which he passes, he beholds his Father and God, ruling in righteousness and mercy; saying to the waves of affliction that threaten to overwhelm him, thus far shall ye go, and no further; and guiding him, unhurt by their fury, to the haven of rest. Yes - "all things," he be-

lieves, "shall work together for his good." God is his guide, his protector, his comforter; and therefore, though "troubled on every side, he is not distressed; though perplexed, he is not in despair; though persecuted, he is not forsaken; though cast down, he is not destroyed "."—"He rejoices in the Lord alway!;" again and again he calls on his soul to rejoice—For "the Lord is his defence, the Holy One of Israel is his King ""—and his "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for him an eternal weight of glory"."

When death approaches, what must be the views and feelings of him who walks only by sight. Can any human power, in which he has hitherto confided, arrest the march of this resistless foe? Can those worldly principles and hopes on which he has rested, remove the apprehensions which the approach of death inspires? Can any earthly consolations alleviate the pangs of dying—any human arm conduct in safety through the dark valley of the shadow of death? How terrible to be left in this last conflict to the darkness, the doubts, and the weakness of human reason! How terrible to encounter, in this awful moment, the apprehensions and pangs of a guilty conscience, pointing to the

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¹ Rom. viii. 28. ¹ 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. ¹ Philip. iv. 4. ¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

turbunal of an offended Judge, to the woes of eternity;—and there is no refuge!

This refuge is enjoyed only by him who lives by faith. His is that inspiring promise of the Redeemer, "He that believeth in me shall never die"." United to that Saviour whom in holy faith he has served, the believer commends to his divine Lord his departing spirit. He who "holds the keys of death and hell"," is with him to "redeem him from death, to ransom him from the power of the grave "." In this last conflict he is supported by the grace of his divine Lord, and he passes through the grave and gate of death to a joyful resurrection.

IV. Lastly.—In regard to the *destiny* of our being—appears still more striking the superiority of him who walks by faith, and not by sight.

This destiny is immortality. But to him who has lived a life of sense; who, fixing his attention only on the things which are seen, and influenced supremely by a regard to them, has been engaged solely in the pursuit of the things of the world, and in the gratification of his sensual passions; who has thus neglected the care of his soul, and has only made provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof: who has lived without God and without Christ in the world;

o John xi. 25.

^p Rev. i. 18.

⁹ Hos. xiii. 14.

^r Eph. ii. 12.

impenitent and unholy; to him—this immortality is an immortality of woe—a woe that in intensity exceeds human thought, and in duration baffles human computation. For "The worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched"."

But to him, who has walked by faith; who, through the merits and grace of Christ received by faith, has been redeemed from sin, and renewed to righteousness; who has made the world and the things of the world, while in moderation he pursued and enjoyed them, subservient to the great work of rendering his Christian calling and election sure; who has adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things; and who faithful unto death has overcome the world; this immortality, which is the destiny of his being, is an immortality of happiness—happiness as far transcending his conceptions as it does his deserts. For "eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for those who love him ""

Oh! what a different destiny to him who walks by sight, and to him who walks by faith—an immortality of woe to the one—an immortality of happiness to the other.

Brethren,—to which of these characters do you belong? Examine yourselves. Is your

[&]quot; Mark ix. 44. 48. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

attention principally fixed on the objects of sense? Do they withdraw you from the supreme pursuit of the things which belong to your eternal peace, from the service of your God and Saviour, from the earnest endeavour to secure your heavenly inheritance? You are walking by sight-things temporal engross you, and you will lose the things eternal. Walk then, I beseech you, as your Christian profession enjoins, by faith, -faith in God, as deserving your supreme homage and service-faith in your Redeemer, through whose propitiation alone you are reconciled unto God, and through whose grace alone redeemed from sin-faith in the unseen glories of Heaven, the object of your constant desire and pursuit. "Thus walking by faith, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless""—you will gain the things that are eternal. And, my brethren, in comparison with these, what are the things temporal that would seduce us to walk by sight, and not by faith? Remember-in the one case our destiny will be, an eternity of woe-in the other, an eternity of bliss.

^u Luke i. 6.

SERMON VI.

THE ASCENSION AND EXALTATION OF CHRIST, AS SET FORTH IN THE 68th PSALM.

[ASCENSION DAY.]

PSALM lxviii. 18.

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive.

This verse, which I have recited as my text, is expressly applied by the Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, to the ascension of Christ into heaven, and to the subsequent conferring on the Apostles of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. The whole Psalm must therefore be considered as applicable to the Gospel dispensation; and particularly to the ascension to heaven, to the exaltation and victories, to the mercy and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the extent and glory of his kingdom. An exposition of the entire Psalm in its spiritual application, after ascertaining its literal and historical import, will therefore be highly suitable to this sacred festival. There is a richness of sentiment, a splen-

dour of imagery, a beauty of structure, which independently of the glorious views which this Psalm affords of the power and the grace of our Lord and Saviour, are calculated to render it highly interesting.

It was composed on the joyful event of the translation of the ark, which was the symbol of the Divine presence with the people of Israel, from its temporary and changing residence, to its permanent habitation on Mount Zion.

From a consideration of the peculiar structure of the Psalm, it appears that distinct portions of it were sung at distinct periods of the solemnity.

The first six verses were sung at the taking up of the ark by the Levites, who were to bear it to Mount Zion. The next eight verses were sung at the commencement of the procession. The fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth verses were sung at the ascent of Mount Zion. The eighteenth and five following verses at the depositing of the ark in this its holy habitation: and the remainder of the Psalm at the conclusion of the solemnities *.

^{*} I have taken the Psalm, as rendered in the version of the Psalms in the Book of Common Prayer. This version differs somewhat in style from the version of the Psalms in the Bible. It is the version which appeared in what was called the Great Bible put forth in England, at an early period of the Reformation, and is placed in the Book of Common Prayer, which was compiled before the present translation of the Bible, and is esteemed by good judges as not inferior in correctness to the version in the Bible.

The first six verses were sung when the appointed Priests and Levites took up the ark; the whole body of them Priests and Levites, as well as of the people, expressing the holy joy of their hearts, by the sound of harps, and psalteries and cymbals, by loud acclamations and songs of praise.

- 1. Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.
- 2. Like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away: and like as wax melteth at the fire, so let the ungodly perish at the presence of God.
- 3. But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God: let them also be merry and joyful.
- 4. O sing unto God, and sing praises unto his Name: magnify him that rideth upon the heavens, as it were upon an horse; praise him in his name Jah; and rejoice before him.
- 5. He is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows: even God in his holy habitation.
- 6. He is the God that maketh men to be of one mind in an house, and bringeth the prisoners out of captivity: but letteth the runagates continue in scarceness.

God, the God of Israel, is here humbly supplicated to appear and discomfit his enemies, and the enemies of Israel; that the ark, the symbol of his presence, which they were now to bear.

might rest in security on Mount Zion. The first verse-" Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him"—was always used by the armies of Israel, when in their march to Canaan they took up the sacred ark. The name Jah, which occurs in another verse, is an abbreviation of Jehovah, and signifies the eternal and self-existent God; and by this name, his people are called to sing praises unto him, "riding," in his majesty, "in the heavens,"-" a father of the fatherless, and who defendeth the cause of the widows "-" making of one mind"-blessing with peace and unity the families of his people; "bringing" them from their cruel "captivity" in Egypt; while the " runagates," or the rebellious oppressors of Israel, as well as the rebellious Israelites themselves, "continue in scarceness," their families desolated, and their prosperity blasted.

In the same sublime imagery does the Church celebrate the praises of her Redeemer, ascending, as did the ark, the symbol of his glory, to the heavenly Zion.

"Arise," O Jesus, thou King of glory, "Scatter thine enemies,"—all who reject thy mercy, who despise thy grace, who hate or oppose thy adorable name. Let them "flee before thee."

As the thick cloud of "smoke" is suddenly dissipated by the wind, so shalt thou "drive away thine enemies," formidable as is their array.

As "wax dissolveth before the fire," so shall the ungodly perish.

"But let the righteous," those whose trust and hope is in thee, "rejoice" at these displays of thy power: "let them be merry and joyful," for they are protected and blessed by thee their Saviour.

Yea, "sing unto God," ye people, "sing praises unto the name" of your Redeemer—for he is exalted in his power above the heavens, receiving there the homage of saints and angels, of cherubim and seraphim. Praise him who is "Jehovah,"—who partakes of the glory and power of the Godhead, possessing a "name that is above every name."—"Rejoice before him."

For God is the "father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows;" "making of one mind his family" the Church, redeeming his people from spiritual "captivity;" while "the runagates," the rebellious, the impenitent, "continue in scarceness;" dwell in a dry land, deprived of the bread of life, and the waters of comfort and salvation.

The part of the Psalm from the seventh to the fourteenth verses is supposed to have been sung at the commencement of the splendid procession which was to conduct the ark to Mount Zion.

7. O God, when thou wentest forth before the people, when thou wentest through the wilderness,

8. The earth shook, and the heavens dropped at the presence of God: even as Sinai also was moved at the presence of God, who is the God of Israel.

9. Thou, O God, sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance, and refreshedst it when it was weary.

10. Thy congregation shall dwell therein, for thou, O God, hast of thy goodness prepared for the poor.

11. The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers.

12. Kings with their armies did flee and were discomfited: and they of the household divided the spoil.

13. Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove that is covered with silver wings, and her feathers like gold.

14. When the Almighty scattered kings for their sake, then were they as white as snow in Salmon.

These sublime verses, commemorate the appearance of God for the deliverance of his people from Egyptian bondage; conducting them through the wilderness in a cloudy pillar by day, and by night in a pillar of fire. When God descended to proclaim the Law to Israel, at the appearance of their dread Creator, the "earth"

trembled, the very "heavens" were dissolved, and "Sinai" strong and stable Sinai, seemed to be "moved" out of place.

In their march through this barren "wilderness," God did miraculously provide for his people, his inheritance, refreshing the dry and desert places through which they pursued their journey with "rain" from heaven, making even the "wilderness" a comfortable place for his "congregation to dwell in," "preparing" bread from heaven for his "poor."

Not only did he refresh and strengthen them, but when he "gave the word," they were victorious over their enemies; and "great was the company of the preachers;" great was the number of those who with songs and acclamations proclaimed the triumph.

For "kings with their armies did flee" suddenly "discomfited;" "they of the household," even feeble women and domestics, so complete was the victory, "divided the spoil." Though in their bondage in Egypt, they were reduced to the most servile drudgery, and "lying among the pots," were covered with dust and ashes, yet so complete was their translation from this miserable state, and so striking was the contrast of their prosperity and triumph, that enriched with the spoils of their enemies, they exhibited the splendid and lovely appearance of the dove, whose "wings and feathers," "silver and gold," inter-

changeably mixed in them, shine forth with inimitable lustre.

Thus when Jehovah granted his people victory, and "scattered kings for their sake," "they were white as snow in Salmon," they shone forth splendid and glorious, as the sun-beams that glisten on the snowy top of "Salmon."

This celebration of the victories which God wrought for his people was highly appropriate, when the ark, the symbol of that Divine presence and power which had given them victory, was to be translated to Zion its dwelling place, and to be the pledge of future protection, prosperity and triumph to God's people.

But so striking is the similitude, that we are naturally led to transfer this triumphant celebration of God's victories for Israel of old, to those more splendid victories obtained by the Messiah for the true Israel of God, when he delivered his people from worse than Egyptian bondage. Darkness covered the land, rocks were rent, and the earth was opened, when he achieved his victory over the grave. He marches before his people as their invisible but all-powerful Leader through this "wilderness" of the world; he waters their thirsty souls with the comforts of his grace; and refreshes their weary spirits with the bread of life.

The "Lord gave the word" at the day of Pentecost, and "great" became "the company of

the preachers;" and by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost, humble and contemned men subdued the kingdoms of the earth to the spiritual dominion of Jesus Christ. Under the figure of a people "lying among pots," becoming as the beautiful and glittering "dove," we behold a representation of the Church depressed and afflicted shining forth in the garments of salvation; and sinners bewailing their iniquities in dust and ashes, adorned by divine grace with the splendid robes of righteousness.

The joyful procession had now arrived at the foot of Mount Zion, and as they bore towards its summit the holy symbol of the divine presence, the Priests and Levites chanted forth the strains.

- 15. As the hill of Basan, so is God's hill: even an high hill, as the hill of Basan.
- 16. Why hop ye so, ye high hills? this is God's hill in the which it placeth him to dwell: yea, the Lord will abide in it for ever.
- 17. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: and the Lord is among them, as in the holy place of Sinai.

Lowly amidst the towering mountains which surrounded it was the hill of Zion. In the most sublime strain of poetry, they are all personified; and inimitable spirit is thus given to the scene. The mountains rejoice, they grieve, they speak, they move. "Basan and Salmon," the

hills surrounding Zion, are represented as tossing their heads in proud disdain, and casting upon this lowly mount the look of scorn.

Still—Basan may boast its high eminences, but Zion is also a noble hill. For why, O Basan and Salmon, do ye triumph in your lofty summits, and frown with disdain on the lowly Zion? Mount Zion is exalted above you. For it is "God's hill;" the hill in the which "it pleaseth" the Lord of the universe "to dwell" by the symbol of his presence; and to which, as his abode "for ever," he is now ascending, like a victorious conqueror, surrounded by "thousands of angels;" as he manifested his glory on Mount Sinai of old.

Here is a representation of that celestial Zion of which the earthly Zion was a type, and in which only it can literally be said, that Jehovah dwells in it for ever. This spiritual Zion, humble as she is in worldly estimation, is higher than the kingdoms of the earth; for Jesus the Saviour has ascended to the possession of it—"Twenty thousand, even thousands of angels," bore him in triumph to this his everlasting abode; and hailed him as the Lord and Ruler of a kingdom, not like that of Sinai, of justice and wrath, but of love and mercy.

^{18.} Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea,

even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

- 19. Praised be the Lord daily, even the God who helpeth us, and poureth his benefits upon us.
- 20. He is our God, even the God of whom cometh salvation: God is the Lord, by whom we escape death.
- 21. God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his wickedness.
- 22. The Lord hath said, I will bring my people again as I did from Basan: mine own will I bring again, as I did sometime from the deep of the sea.
- 23. That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and that the tongue of thy dogs may be red through the same.

This was the triumphant strain which was poured forth when the sacred procession rested on the heights of Zion; and when the ark was deposited in the place appointed for it.

God "went up on high," taking possession by the ark, the symbol of his presence, of the heights of Zion;—the enemies of Israel, who so often held them in captivity, he victoriously "led captive." As conquerors scatter gifts among the people, God enriched his chosen with the spoils of the vanquished nations, which he bestowed on them as "gifts;" and he prepared even for his rebellious "enemies" the richest blessing; the

privilege of coming unto him, and of worshipping him in that holy Mount, where he dwelt, by the symbol of his presence, dispensing grace and

blessing.

And Christ, the king of glory, like the ark on which the Divine glory rested, the emblem of that fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in him, has "gone up on high" into the heavens, from that world into which he came to redeem it. His ascension was graced by no common spoils-" captivity he led captive"-Sin, Satan, and Death, the tyrants of the human race, were bound to the triumphal car, in which he mounted up to the everlasting doors. No common "gifts" did this King of glory dispense-The manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost-" the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, tongues, and their interpretation a,"-these were the gifts by which, bestowed upon Apostles and Evangelists, they converted the world to the faith of his name. By him was the Holy Ghost given for the "work of the ministry b;" so that now, the spiritual authority which "no man taketh unto himself"," is derived from him, the Divine head of his spiritual body, the Church; and thus, agreeably to his own promise, he is with that spiritual society "to the end of the world d." Nor were these the only

^a 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10.

^c Heb. v. 4.

b Eph. iv. 12. d Matt. xxviii. 20.

gifts bestowed on men.—The blessed Comforter, whom he sent, becomes to all, even to his enemies who return to him, "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, the spirit of holy fear."—Thus, Jesus, the Lord God of Hosts, by the gifts and graces of his spirit, "dwelt among men."

" Praised then be the Lord daily," may God's people now, more than his people of old, exclaim, with elevated and grateful joy-" even the God who helpeth" us with almighty strength, and conferreth upon us the "blessings" of eternity. Praised be the Lord—for "he is our God, even the God of whom cometh" a spiritual and everlasting "salvation."--" God is the Lord by whom we escape death"-Jesus, the Almighty King, holds the keys of death and hell, and he has redeemed his pledge-"O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Though full of mercy and love to the penitent and humble, yet, on the impenitent, the victorious Messiah shall scatter vengeance. He shall "wound the head of his enemies," shall utterly destroy them who, notwithstanding the displays of his mercy and the warnings and invitations of his grace, "go on still in their wickedness."

But "he will bring his own as he did from Basan—his own as he did some time from the depths of the sea."

As Jehovah of old promised to renew, for his own people, the victories which he had wrought for them at Basan, and the deliverances at the Red Sea—so shall the all-conquering Messiah, making "the heathen his inheritance," and establishing his kingdom on the ruins of the kingdom of Sin and Satan, more than renew these triumphs of old.

Terrible indeed will be that day of the Lord. when from the overthrow of his enemies, the Messiah comes as "from Edom, and with dyed garments from Bozrahe"—Terrible will be the excision of the guilty opposers of his power. An image of it is exhibited to us in this Psalm in a carnage so tremendous, that the blood which is shed becomes a sea, in which the conqueror, wading, dips his feet, and the "tongue of the dogs is red" with lapping the gore. It is the day when thou, patient and lowly Lamb of God, taking vengeance on thine hardened and irreclaimable adversaries, becomest "the Lion of the tribe of Judah";" and "who shall be able to stand."

Sublime as is every part of this noble anthem, particularly glorious is the conclusion, which was struck up by the sweet singers of Israel, when the solemnity was finished that had securely deposited the ark on Mount Zion.

Isaiah İxiii. 1.

24. It is well seen, O God, how thou goest: how thou, my God and King, goest in the sanctuary.

Solemn the pomp, splendid the procession. And solemn was the pomp, splendid the procession when the King of righteousness and peace, attended by hosts of angels, was borne on a cloud of light and glory to his celestial sanctuary.

25. The singers go before, the minstrels follow after: in the midst are the damsels playing with the timbrels.

Thus of old, with instruments of music, did God's people celebrate his dwelling among them; and thus now at the joyful sound of the voice and the organ, does the Christian Church celebrate the gracious presence of her Redeemer and King.

26. "Give thanks, O Israel, unto God the Lord in the congregations,"—in the assemblies of the people. Give thanks unto God the Saviour, not with a lifeless praise, but with a praise coming "from the ground of the heart."

Universal was the attendance of the tribes of Israel at the procession of the great King to his habitation on Zion.

27. "There is little Benjamin," styled "their Ruler:" because, "from this tribe came Saul, the first ruler of Israel"—" and the Princes of Judah their counsel."

Judah appeared, that royal tribe, the tribe of David, the "counsel," the support and prop of the kingdom; and from their most distant bor-

ders came "the Princes of Zebulon and the Princes of Naphthali;" all consenting to fix the sanctuary on Zion, and making Jerusalem their chief joy. And thus when the Apostles unfolded the banner of the cross, distant tribes flocked unto the Saviour, and the kingdoms of the world became the kingdoms of God and of his Christ.

28. For God sent forth his strength for thee, "O Zion,—stablish O God," the thing, "the glorious work" which thou hast wrought in us.

29. For "thy temple's sake at Jerusalem;" for that more holy and more beloved temple, the mystical body of thy Son, the spiritual Zion—So as of old, "kings brought presents unto thee," the kings of the Gentiles made oblations upon thine altar; in these latter days, Princes shall fall down and worship the King of glory who reigns in the Christian Church; all nations shall do him homage.

30. "When the company of the spear-men, and multitude of the mighty are scattered abroad among the beasts of the people," when their mighty armies are dispersed, and fall a prey to the people, fierce and furious as the beasts of the field, "so that" to purchase peace, "they humbly bring pieces of silver;" when God of old thus "scattered the people that delight in war."

31. "Princes came out of Egypt," to congratulate Israel on their triumphs; "the Morians land," Ethiopia joined in the worship of Jeho-

vah, and "stretched out her hands unto God" --Proselytes from distant nations, joined in the worship of the God of Israel. Thus does the Christian look forward with eager hope to the blissful period, when the peaceful kingdom of the Messiah being universally established, nations shall learn war no more; the garments of the warrior, rolled in blood, shall be laid aside for the robes of righteousness and purity;" there shall be none to hurt or to destroy in all the holy mountain of God "," Egypt shall be again the scene of God's victories, not of his wrath, but of his mercy. And Ethiopia, depressed, degraded, wretched Ethiopia, from the depths of misery and despair, shall stretch forth her hands, not in vain supplications to dumb idols, but to "God" - God who helpeth her; God of whom cometh salvation: "God the Lord, by whom she escapes death."

32. "Sing then unto God, O ye kingdoms of the earth"—for ye have seen, not the temporal victories of Israel of old, but the salvation of God—"O sing praises unto the Lord;"

33. "Who sitteth in the heavens over all from the beginning," King of kings and Lord of lords, riding through the heavens in his Majesty: "Lo, he doth send out his voice, yea, and that a mighty voice"—mighty as thunder, was that voice which of old, struck terror into his enemies: mighty

is that voice of his grace, which now convinces the impenitent of sin, and strikes them to the

dust, supplicants for mercy.

34. He is still over the spiritual "Israel" its King and Ruler. "Ascribe ye power unto him"—" His worship and strength are in the clouds"—pure and elevated as the clouds of heaven.

35. "O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places"—wonderful the displays of thy grace and mercy in thy earthly sanctuary; "even the God of Israel," the God of his spiritual Israel gathered unto him out of every nation and kindred and people and tongue. "He will give strength and power unto his people"—Assailed as they are by formidable enemies, and beset by temptations, he will give them strength and power to overcome; to be more than conquerors over sin and Satan and death—"Blessed then be God"—Blessed be the God "of Israel."

Christians—the God whom ye worship is the Lord who rideth on the heavens; who driveth his enemies, as the smoke vanishing away, as the wax melting before the fire—before whom, when he goeth forth, the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, Mount Sinai is moved—He is gone up on high leading captive the enemies that had enslaved you. But he is still over Israel the Lord their God; and from the throne of his celestial sanctuary, he gives gifts unto men.

"He dwells among you," in his word, in his ministry, in his ordinances. In them he is the God who helpeth you, even the God who poureth his benefits upon you," of whom cometh salvation—Oh, terrible will he be in his wrath, when he takes vengeance on his adversaries; but comforting his presence to his faithful people, on whom he confers strength and power.

"Give thanks then, O Israel, unto God the Lord in the congregations, from the ground of the heart." "O sing praises unto the Lord." "Bring presents unto him." Bring to his altar the oblations of humble and holy hearts. Bring to his altar the offerings of charity for the congregation whom he hath redeemed.

Take the wings of faith, and ascend to the heaven where he is enthroned. There dwell with him in heart and mind. For "wonderful is he in that his holy place," where he dispenses the gifts of life and immortality and glory. There is he the "God of Israel," of that great multitude which no man can number, whom he hath made kings and priests unto God. There he gives unto his people everlasting strength and power. And there, in the songs of that celestial sanctuary, Blessed, blessed, for ever more is God the Lord.

SERMON VII.

THE CHRISTIAN LOOKING FOR HIS SAVIOUR

(SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.)

Ригь. ій. v. 20.

From whence also we look for the Saviour.

HUMAN nature looks beyond its present existence with solicitude and with apprehension—with solicitude, for its destiny there, notwithstanding the strong suggestions of reason, and its powerful hopes, may be annihilation—and the possibility, however remote, of the extinction of being, must excite the most painful emotions.

And human nature looks to that futurity which succeeds its present existence with apprehension; for when enlightened by the revelations of the Gospel, it is assured that an immortal state of being awaits it beyond the grave, the sense of sin and of guilt awakens the dread, lest that state of being should prove a state of endless woe.

The same Gospel that reveals an immortal existence so consolatory to the *hopes* of human nature, announces the truth so alarming to its guilty *fears*, that in the state beyond the grave, there is "a worm that never dies, and a fire that never will be quenched." the portion and the punishment of sin and guilt.

The ungodly and the impenitent then must look for the coming of that Saviour who surrounded with divine majesty, and armed with almighty power is to judge the world in righteousness, with apprehension and dread.

Not so with Christians—Christians in truth as well as in profession, in deed as well as in name—they who reconciled unto God through penitence and faith in the merits of his Son, have been redeemed from iniquity by the Spirit of his grace, and sanctified in soul and body, serve him in righteousness and holiness—they whose conversation is in heaven; and who live in purity and holiness as the destined inhabitants of this heavenly home. They look for the Saviour with a hope that maketh not ashamed.

They look for the Saviour-

To raise their bodies from the corruption of the grave, and to invest them with immortal glory.

To bring forth their souls from the place of the departed, and to unite them to their glorified bodies.

^a Mark ix. 44, 48.

To pronounce their acquittal,
To vindicate their integrity,
To proclaim their good works, and

To award to them the immortal joys of his heavenly kingdom.

I. Christians look for the Saviour to raise their bodies from the corruption of the grave, and to invest them with glory.

The grave is the dreary place where, for aught that reason can tell, even when she prompts the hope of deliverance and immortality to the soul, corruption mingles for ever the body with the dust of the earth. But Christians, deriving their hopes from a higher source than human reason, from that Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light, know that "the grave shall give up its dead," that corruption shall release its victims. They hear a voice from heaven saying-"O death I will be thy plagues-O grave, I will be thy destruction b." It is the voice of that Saviour who "by that mighty power by which he is able to subdue all things unto himself," will "change their vile bodies and make them like unto his own glorious body "."

What a change—from this frail, decaying, diseased tabernacle, the clog of the vigorous spirit with which it is associated, to a body strong, imperishable, perfect, aiding the soul in

b Hos. xiii, 14.

c Philip. iii. 21.

all its operations—to a body glorious, like the glorified body of the Redeemer, that body with which he will reign for ever as the King of Glory, and from which will be shed forth that radiance which will fill with light, and joy, and transport the countless hosts of heaven. Christians, there is no terror for us in the grave, no dread for us in corruption. The grave shall give up its dead-corruption shall put on incorruption—and "we shall be changed d."

II. And we look also for the Saviour-

To bring forth our souls from the place of the departed, and to unite them to our glorified bodies.

It is the triumphant belief and inexpressible consolation of Christians, that the Saviour, in whom they trust, posseses "all power in Heaven and on earth";" that he is "the Lord of the dead and of the living;" and that, therefore, their bodies sleeping in the grave, and their souls resting in the place of the departed, are under his almighty guard. They know that, while the sepulchre held his body, his soul was in *Paradise*; for so he declared to the penitent companion of his last agonies—"This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise!" Where the head was, there shall they, his members, be also. And during that period, which elapses between their death, and

d 1 Cor. xv. 52. Matt. xxviii. 18.

Luke xxiii. 43.

the day when they are summoned to judgment, until which the happiness of heaven, the happiness of body and of soul is not awarded; while their bodies rest in the grave, their souls are in the place of the departed; in that Paradise, where the soul of their Lord went before them; and which, being sanctified and blessed by his presence, must be a place of unspeakable joy and felicity, But Heaven is the final home of Christians—the place where glory awaits their bodies, and the consummation of felicity their souls. To Heaven their Saviour went, to prepare a place for them; and to Heaven he will translate them, when, at the last day, he comes to proclaim complete redemption to his people the redemption of the body from the grave, and the translation of the soul from its state of exalted. indeed, but still inferior felicity, to the fulness of bliss in union with a glorified body, in that Heaven, where they will be for ever with the Lord.

What cause of triumph, Christians! The grave, indeed, receives your corruptible bodies, only to give them up incorruptible and glorious. And the place of the departed, the Paradise of the just, receives your souls to unspeakable felicity—a felicity which, like that of Heaven, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither can the heart of man conceives;" only to send them forth, at the resurrection at the last day, to the consummation

of bliss, in that eternal and glorious kingdom, where, in union with those glorified bodies, from which, until this day of your complete redemption, you have been separated, you shall reign for ever with your glorious and highly exalted Lord.

III. Christians look for the Saviour, to pronounce their acquittal.

Their acquittal from that sentence of condem nation, which, through transgression, they have incurred. This acquittal had, indeed, as to its reconciling and consoling effects, been frequently pronounced, in all those holy ordinances, which are the divinely constituted means and pledges of pardon and mercy; and in all those holy acts of penitence, and faith and prayer, by which Christians hold communion with their God and Saviour. In the mercy and grace thus assured, and conveyed to them, they have rejoiced. And having "the testimony of their conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity"," they served their God and Saviour, they have "confidence towards Godi," and rejoice in him, as their reconciled God and Father. But still the day of the coming of their Lord, is the day in which publicly acknowledging them as his people, he will publicly proclaim their pardon.

Fear not then, Christian, the scrutiny or the disclosures of the last day. Alas! were "judg-

^h 2 Cor. i. 12.

i 1 John iii. 21.

ment then to be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet'," who could stand! Were the holy and almighty, and omniscient Being, who presides at the tribunal before which are assembled the quick and the dead, to judge as one strict to mark what is done amiss, who could abide? But, Christians, you, whose sins have, in humble penitence, been confessed and renounced; whose constant prayer and endeavour it is to depart from iniquity, and to "walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless1; and whose hopes of forgiveness have rested, not on your penitence, however deep and humble; not on your renunciation of sin, however sincere and effectual; not on your obedience, however strict and universal; but only on the merits of Him, "whose blood alone cleanseth from all sin^m," and whose grace alone redeems from its dominion—your transgressions, Christians, on that day, when the thoughts of all hearts shall be disclosed, and every secret thing be brought to light, shall not rise in judgment against you, to condemn you. Your Saviour, whom you have humbly sought in penitence and faith, and not sought in vain; he to whom you have committed the salvation of your souls, and whose mercy and grace have been your trust and your solace, will then shield you from the accusations of conscience, from the assaults of the great adversary, from the condemning sentence of justice.

^{&#}x27;Isaiah xxviii. 17. Luke i. 6. n 1 John i. 7.

1V. And Christians—you look for your Saviour to vindicate your integrity.

That integrity which envy may have sought to tarnish and malice to assail; and which, amidst the collisions of the world, may have been suspected or impeached. How often in this respect do they who would "live godly in Christ Jesus" even at the present day, "suffer persecution"." How often do they who regarding human favour and applause as inferior objects of pursuit, and very imperfect motives to virtuous exertion, on all occasions make the demands of duty the paramount consideration, and therefore inflexibly comply with those demands, however opposed to prevailing opinions, or to the views and the spirit that rule the varying fashion of the day how often do they incur the suspicion of the weak, the censure of the temporising, and the calumnies of the malicious. Few are they who, in this erring world, where selfishness is the actuating spirit, and unkindness and censoriousness sit in judgment on character and motives can uniformly and with unbending aim pursue the path of duty, without being exposed to the surmises of suspicion, or the attacks of calumny. It was of this world, that one who experienced all its vicissitudes, and who reigned a monarch on the throne, and roamed an exile in the wilderness, pronounced

the declaration-" Mischief and sorrow are in the midst of it deceit and guile depart not from its streets." And it was in this world, that he of whom this suffering and calumniated monarch was a type, he who was as pure and perfect as that divine nature which he sharedsustained in his inflexible opposition to prevailing errors and vices, every reproach and calumny and suffering that fiend-like malice could suggest. And Christian, thou art not above thy Master. Wonder not then, still less repine, that in thy inflexible defence of truth and discharge of duty, reproaches and calumnies and sufferings assail thee. Possess thy soul in patience. thy master rose from the cloud of reproach and calumny and suffering that overshadowed him, to divine dignity and glory and honour. And here too thou shalt be as thy master. For thou doest look for him, to sit in judgment, to bring to light the thoughts and purposes of the heart, and then before men and angels thy "righteousness shall appear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noon-day p."

Christians—look for their Saviour.

V. To proclaim their good works.

Not as constituting the meritorious cause of their advancement to that blessedness which he has prepared for them—not as if they were so pure and perfect as to stand the scrutiny of Di-

[°] Psalm lv. 11.

Psalm xxxvii. 6.

vine holiness and justice—not as if they were wrought through the unassisted strength of nature, and therefore constituted a ground for boasting. No, sincere and humble Christiansyou nourish no such vain expectations-you would startle at the suggestion of such presumptuous pretensions. You have no object of glorying but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; no dependance for salvation, but his all-sufficient merits. Alas-you are daily humbled with the conviction that "in many things you offend," and that your best works need to be repented of. You feel so sensibly the corruption of your nature, the weakness of your best resolutions, and the power of the temptations which solicit and assail you, that in deep humility you acknowledge that the grace of God alone can keep you from falling, and make you conquerors. But still you look to your Saviour to proclaim at the last day your good works, as fruits of that faith which has thus proved its strength and its sincerity; as qualifications for that blessedness which "the pure in heart" only can enjoy, and to which they alone who have abounded in the work of the Lord will be advanced; and as evidences of the power of that Divine grace through which you have thus "fought a good fight," and secured a crown of glory.

How exalted, Christians, are the hopes set be-

fore you. The day which will disclose the secrets of all hearts; bring to light the hidden things of darkness; and, in the disclosure of their secret sins, as well as open crimes, before an assembled universe, overwhelm the wicked with dismay, will, in unfolding all your secret virtues and good deeds, your exertions in the cause of benevolence, your pious labours and beneficence in advancing the kingdom of your Redeemer, be to you a day of triumphant rejoicing. Then "shall you have praise of God." For then you look for the Saviour,

VI. To award to you the immortal joys of his heavenly kingdom.—Joys that will be the consummation of all the holy joys which you have here experienced, and infinitely more than compensate you for all the sorrows which you have here endured. The exercise of the powers of your glorified bodies and purified souls, on every object in its most exalted state, that can gratify them; on the counsels, the works, and the dispensations of God; on the holy saints and angelic beings, with whom you will be for ever associated; and especially on the glory of the Godhead, manifested in the glorified human nature of Jesus Christ, will fill you with the highest bliss which your nature, in its full perfection, is capable of receiving or enjoying. And this bliss will be for ever-No alloy, no change, no termination. This is the bliss, to award which you look for the Saviour. You look for him, for

he hath said-" Lo, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be "." Your works, quickened by his Spirit, guided and animated by faith in him, have been those of purity and righteousness; and your reward, through his abundant and unmerited mercy, will be that of glory and felicity for ever. Often contrast, Christians, the imperfection of the best joys of the world; the alloy that, through the infirmity and corruption of nature, here tarnishes even that bliss of communion with your God and Saviour, which the world can neither give nor take away; with the exalted and unalloyed happiness, which will be your portion, when your Saviour, pronouncing you " blessed of his Father" calls you to " inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world;" and more and more aspire after this blissful consummation; more and more have " your hearts there fixed, where these true joys are to be found;" and more and more live as the citizens of that Heaven, from whence you look for the Saviour to exalt you to perfect bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory.

It is then, Christians, your inestimable privilege to look for the Saviour with the holiest hopes and the liveliest joy. For he will raise

h Rev. xxii. 12.

your bodies from the corruption of the grave, and clothe them with incorruptible glory. He will bring your souls from the place of the departed, where in joy and hope they have abode, and unite them with your glorified bodies. From the guilt and punishment of your sins, which you have confessed and renounced, he will publicly absolve you. Your integrity, which suspicion may have tarnished or malice assailed, he will vindicate before men and angels. Your good works he will proclaim before the assembled universe, as the evidences of the sincerity of your faith in him, and the pledges of your qualification for that blessedness to which he will exalt you. And this blessedness will be, the enjoyment of the bliss of his heavenly kingdom, of the perfection of felicity in body and soul.

To enjoy these exalted hopes, who is there that would not live a life of faith and of holiness? Who is there that would deem too great the sacrifices, too rigorous the exactions, too severe the requisitions, too strict the obedience, which are necessary to the indulgence of the holy triumphs with which the Christian looks for his Saviour? Who is there that, in the exercise of lively faith, thus looking for his Saviour, would not rise above the world in holy superiority to its trials, and in the comparative contempt of its highest pleasures? Alas! there are those whose sensual tempers, whose ungodly lives, whose devoted-

ness to the world evidence that the heaven from which they ought to look for the Saviour, and the glorious triumphs with which they might look for his coming, occupies little of their thoughts and none of their affections. Alas! they must look for him-but to pronounce their eternal condemnation!

SERMON VIII.

THE COMFORTER.

[A WHIT-SUNDAY SERMON.]

108

John XV. 26.

But when the Comforter is come.

AND, my brethren, the Comforter has come. A religion whose Author was, to human appearance, an obscure Nazarene, who suffered as a malefactor; whose founders were contemned fishermen; and which in its spirit and its precepts is opposed to all the prejudices and corrupt passions of our nature, could not have been propagated in the world by human artifice. It must owe its establishment to the supernatural power of its humble founders. Our assembling then this day in this holy temple, enjoying the hopes and the consolations and the triumphs of this religion, proves that the divine "Comforter," by whose miraculous aid twelve obscure Galileans achieved the conversion of the world, has come.

It is obvious, on the very face of this declaration, and of other declarations of our Lord where he speaks of the Comforter, that a person is meant—and a person distinct from himself, and from God the Father. Thus he says in the preceding chapter-" I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, to abide with you for ever a." Christ himself here speaks as a person; the Father is considered as a person; and in the same character as a person, the Comforter is regarded. With what colour of truth can it then be said by the opponents of the Trinity, that the Holy Ghost is not a person? Again, in the 26th verse of the same chapter: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Chost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." Here are presented three persons—the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost; the Father, who sends the Comforter; and our Lord, in whose name the Comforter is sent. And the Comforter is represented as performing the act of a person, "as teaching all things." Further, in the verse from which my text is taken,-" But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.',

^e John xiv. 16.

In this passage the Holy Ghost is again spoken of as a person. But it is to be remarked, that Christ is represented as doing what the Father does in the other passages—he sends the Holy Ghost. The sending the Holy Ghost, therefore, is the joint act of the Father and of Christ. Would God thus associate with himself any created being?

Further. The act of sending the Holy Ghost is a divine act. But Christ here sends the Holy Ghost. Christ, therefore, performing a divine act, is a divine person. Teaching all things is also a divine act; and therefore, the Holy Ghost teaching all things, must be a divine person. These single passages prove the personality and divinity of Christ and of the Holy Ghost; and, of course, the doctrine of the Trinity.

In the subsequent chapter there is testimony to the same effect, if possible still more decisive. "If I go not away," says our Lord, "the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment"—"And he will guide you unto all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come b." Here again the Holy Ghost appears as a person per-

b John xvi. 7, &c.

forming divine acts; and of course, he is a divine person. And yet he is in intimate union with the Father and with Christ the Son, by whom he is sent; for he speaks and hears nothing but conjointly with them. Here then is "the Trinity in unity"."

The title Comforter, obviously denotes the office of the Holy Ghost, as conveying consolation. It has another allied meaning, that of advocate; one who pleads for another, and transacts his cause. The same word here translated Comforter, is applied to Christ in other passages, and rendered advocate^d. And the Holy Ghost is an advocate, as now conducting the great work of our redemption, by destroying in us the dominion of sin, and thus reconciling us to God. It is worthy of remark, that the term rendered Comforter, is applied to the Holy Ghost only in this conversation of our Lord with his apostles; where it is apparent that he uses it in the obvious sense of Comforter. And the peculiar propriety of this use will appear, if we consider the condition in which the apostles were left after the departure of their Lord.

It was a condition which, in all respects, needed consolation; the presence of a Comforter.

He, to whom they were endeared by the most intimate and long continued intercourse; with

[·] Athanasian Creed.

whom they had passed through so many eventful scenes; whose voice had been so long to them the oracle of Divine instruction, of peace and of consolation; who, for their sakes, had sustained persecution and contumely, and encountered the death of the cross-had left them. The ties of affection which had united them to him, were rent asunder. They were deprived of the benefit of his instruction, and of the consolation of his company and converse. His departure, therefore, recalling to their minds his virtues, his kindness, his beneficence, his power and compassion; and awakening the recollection of the base ingratitude with which they requited his condescension and love-must have filled them with despondency and sorrow. The only hope that cheered their hearts was the promise that he who had deprived them of the consolations and blessings of his own presence, would not "leave them comfortless," but would "send to them another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, to abide with then for ever e."

But they were also left, surrounded with difficulties. As the companions of a despised Nazarene, they had incurred the contempt and reproach of their brethren the Jews. In following him whom the Pharisees and Rulers had rejected, they en-

^e John xiv. 16, 18.

countered the scoffs and the persecution of these proud and powerful leaders of the people. In espousing the cause of him whom the council of the Jews had condemned as a seditious and dangerous disturber of the nation, they incurred the imputation and the hazard of being ranked as the enemies of Cæsar. What could the followers of a crucified malefactor expect from the envy, the pride, and the malice of those who had persecuted their master, but the same insults, persecution, and death which he had suffered? Thus surrounded with difficulties and dangers, did Christ leave his disciples Surely they needed that Divine Comforter whom he promised that he would send to console and protect them.

The work also in which they were pledged to engage was of emment difficulty and hazard. It was the conversion of the world. The ambition and prejudices of the Jews, the pride and vices of the Gentiles, were to be opposed. The ceremonial law of Moses, so firmly fixed in the prejudices and pride of the Jewish nation, was to be abrogated. The vain systems on which the Gentile philosophers had staked their reputations, and which they cherished as the monuments of their genius and fame to future generations, were all to be subverted. The passions of the human heart, which having long rioted in every species of sensual indulgence, exercised the most absolute sway over a degenerate and corrupt world, were

to be subdued. And all this was to be done by ignorant and contemned fishermen. Destitute of learning as of power, they were to oppose not only the power and learning of the world, but the formidable host of the human passions. With what eager solicitude must they have looked for that Divine *Comforter*, that Spirit of consolation and of strength, by whom they were to be supported in all their trials, enabled to vanquish their enemies, and to march through the world the triumphant heralds of salvation.

And the Comforter came. That Divine Master, who had afforded them so many proofs of his divine power, whom they had seen burst the bands of corruption, and ascend in majesty and power to the heavenly courts, fulfilled his gracious promise to them. On the day of Pentecost the Comforter came.

Every circumstance that marked his coming was impressive and significant. "The sudden sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind," which announced his descent, significantly denoted the nature of his celestial grace; which is free and universal in its extent and effects; and quickening, refreshing, and purifying, yet incomprehensible in its operations, as "the wind which bloweth where it listeth, and yet we cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth "."

The "cloven tongues," which sat upon them, denoted the gift of speaking various languages, with which they were endued. These tongues were represented under the appearance of "fire;" a significant emblem of the quickening light, of the penetrating force and power, and of the purifying energy of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which then descended upon them.

And wonderful were the effects of his descent in respect to the Apostles and to the Church.— With respect to the Apostles. They received miraculous gifts. By the gift of tongues, they were enabled without any previous study to speak various languages, and to "declare in the tongues of every nation the wonderful works of God h." By the gift of miracles, they controlled and changed the laws of nature; healed the sick, cured the lepers, and raised the dead; and thus proved that they were commissioned by that almighty Being, who at first gave to nature the laws which he only can change or control. By the gift of prophecy, they foretold things to come; unfolded the changes and the destinies of the kingdom of their Lord; and thus proved that He was with them, before whom the past, the present, and the future, are as one day. By the gift of wisdom and knowledge, they were enabled to discern "the hidden things of God," the mys-

h Acts ii. 11.

terious and important truths of redemption, and to promulgate them to the world. By the gift of faith, confiding in the power of their Divine Master, they encountered and triumphantly overcame the powers of darkness who opposed the establishment of the kingdom of grace and truth, and brought down every high imagination and every thing that exalted itself against God.

They were thus divinely qualified for the work of converting the world. "God gave the word; and great was the company of them that published it." He arose in the majesty of his strength; and the heralds of salvation, whom he had thus endued with power from on High, beheld his "enemies scattered" before them. "Kings with their armies were discomfited." The cross of their Master triumphed over the pride, the prejudices, and the passions of the bigotted Jew, and the proud and sensual Gentile. "The kingdoms of the world became the kingdoms of their Lord." and Master Jesus Christ.

Brethren, the success that attended the first preaching of the Gospel, affords irrefragable evidence that the Apostles who proclaimed it possessed those miraculous gifts which the festival of this day ascribes to them. The Comforter came. But he came not in a remote corner of the nation; nor in the presence merely of a few

Psalm lxviii. 11. Psalm lxviii. 12. Rev. xi. 15.

obscure individuals. Jerusalem, where all the Jews were assembled at the celebration of one of their principal festivals; where indeed there were "dwelling Jews, devout men out of every nation under Heaven "," was the scene of this event. The gift of tongues, to which the Apostles laid claim, if it had been an imposture, must have been detected; and the false pretence would have brought confusion and disgrace on its authors. No, the Apostles were known to be illiterate men. And when "it was noised abroad that they spake with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." "They were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we them speak in our tongues, the wonderful works of God "."

But, independently of all other evidence, the single fact which contemporary historians attest—the universal propagation of a pure and self-denying religion in a very short period after the death of its author, prove, that they who promulgated it must have been endued with power from on High—that they who thus vanquished the pride, the power, the learning, the

prejudices, and the passions of mankind, must have been armed with supernatural and miraculous gifts.

But, my brethren, the Comforter came not only for the Apostles; but for the Church, and for us its members. "That Spirit of truth" then descended upon the Church, by whose operations Christ "abides with it for ever"—not only the source of that authority by which its officers minister in holy things, but of that grace by which its members are governed and sanctified. As the spirit of illuminations; by his powerful but incomprehensible operations, he enlightens us to understand the truths of God's word, and to discern the riches of grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. As the spirit of quickening power; he awakens the slumbering conscience, and excites, in the careless and impenitent, a sense of their guilt and danger, and an earnest solicitude for the things that belong to their eternal peace. As the spirit of sanctification, he purifies our depraved affections, and renews us after the image of him who created us. As the spirit of consolation, this divine "Comforter" refreshes and animates us through every doubt, difficulty, and trial. And as the spirit of power and might, he enables us successfully to engage in our spiritual warfare; to triumph over

[°] John xiv. 17.

^p John xiv. 16.

all the enemies of our salvation; and finally to attain the crown of everlasting life.

Through the merits and intercession of the Redeemer, the grace of this Holy Spirit is given unto all men, in that degree which enables them to work out their salvation. But Christians enjoy his sanctifying and comforting influences, through their union with the Church, which this Spirit governs and sanctifies. Constituted members of Christ's mystical body in baptism, we are entitled, my Christian brethren, to the influences of that Divine Spirit, by which this body is animated. We are the "temples of the Holy Ghost"; and let us not incur the tremendous guilt of resisting and quenching the Spirit of God.

If we are indifferent and unconcerned in regard to the momentous business of our salvation; let us earnestly implore this quickening Spirit to awaken us from this state of criminal and dangerous security. Subject to the dominion of error and sin; let us supplicate the blessed Spirit of truth and holiness, to renew and sanctify, and purify our souls. When oppressed with the burden of our sins, and assailed by doubt, by sorrow, and adversity; let us earnestly implore this blessed Comforter to inspire us with sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God, through Jesus Christ. Let us not reject, because

they are incomprehensible, his divine operations. Translated, by his power, from the darkness of error into "the marvellous light of Gospel truth;" and restored, by his grace, from "the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God," we shall have the witness, in ourselves, of the reality and efficacy of his gracious influences;—and fruitful in every good work, shall be kept by his power unto salvation.

Come then, blessed Spirit—exercise towards us thy gracious offices. Lead us into truth—sanctify us from all sin—comfort us under all adversity—guide us through the dark valley of the shadow of death—and bring us, finally, to that eternal rest, where, our doubts dispelled, our labours ended, our trials terminated, and our sorrows past, we shall enjoy for ever blissful communion with thee, the Comforter, and with the Father and the Son—to whom three persons but one God, be ascribed all honour, power, majesty, and dominion, world without end.

The Sermons which follow, with the exception of the last, relate to the doctrine of the Trinity generally, and particularly to the personality and offices of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, as set forth in the Nicene Creed.



SERMON X.

ON THE TRUTHS OF REVELATION BEING INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

[TRINITY SUNDAY.]

JoB xi. 7, 8.

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know?

VAIN, my brethren, are all attempts "to find out" that Eternal Being, who in respect to his character and attributes can be known only as far as he has revealed himself to us, and whose infinite essence can never be fully comprehended by finite creatures.

And yet the self-confident spirit of man prompts him to the presumptuous attempt. He leaves the plain and direct path of duty, for the regions of daring speculation; aspiring even to search out God—and to measure, by the feeble line of reason, that divine nature which even the exalted intelligences of Heaven in vain seek to explore. "Canst thou by searching find out

God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know?"

The Church, in the course of her festivals, presents this day to our consideration a truth which, as far as is necessary to our duty and consolation, may be understood, but in other respects is incomprehensible. The Trinity of persons in the Godhead is a doctrine so prominent on the face of the sacred writings, and so intimately connected with every part of the Christian system, that, though in almost every period of the Church, there have been some who have opposed it, Christians generally have cherished it as that fundamental truth of the Gospel which makes it "the power of God unto salvation." If indeed the doctrine of the Trinity be unfounded in Scripture, then results the singular fact, that the great body of those for whom this divine system was designed, have in every age erred in respect to one of its most important characteristics.

The doctrine is incomprehensible. This is the principal cause which has excited against it the objections of human reason, and led some to doubt and others to deny it. The same objection applies to other truths of Religion. It is of importance therefore to prove, that if a doctrine of revelation be supported by proper evidence, its being incomprehensible constitutes no reason-

able objection to it. To this point let me now direct your attention.

That a truth of revelation is incomprehensible, constitutes no reasonable objection to it. For

- I. It is in the nature of things impossible that all the truths of revelation should be level to our comprehension.
- II. Wise purposes are accomplished by their transcending our reason.
- III. The objection that they are incomprehensible, will apply with equal force to those truths of nature and religion, which are universally admitted.
- IV. Lastly—their being incomprehensible does not impair their practical use and value.

Certain truths of revelation transcend our comprehension. This constitutes no reasonable objection to them—For

I. It is in the nature of things impossible that all the truths of revelation should be level to our comprehension.

These truths respect principally the Divine mind—and "God is in heaven and we upon earth "—Who can ascend and penetrate his essence! "God is a spirit "." Who hath seen him at any time, or can see him? Shall we require to behold before we will acknowledge that glory which no mortal eye can approach, and

Ecclesiastes v. 2. b John iv. 24.

before which Cherubim and Seraphim veil their faces! Shall we, who are but as of yesterday, attempt to comprehend him who is "from everlasting to everlasting!" Limited and feeble as are our powers, shall we aim to attain a full knowledge of that transcendantly glorious Being, whom the highest order of created intelligences but imperfectly know! One moment's sober exercise of our reason would teach us that these expectations are vain and presumptuous. One moment's impartial consideration would convince us that in a revelation which respects the Divine mind and the unseen things of eternity, and our own spiritual and immortal soul, there must be truths above our comprehension. A religion in which no truth transcends his reason never was given, never can be given to man. But

II. Wise and good purposes are accomplished by the mystery which surrounds certain truths of religion.

As intelligent and accountable beings, it seems fit that we should be trained, by a course of moral discipline, for virtue and happiness. As dependant creatures, humility and submission are among the highest virtues that can adorn our characters. Here then is the moral excellence of that mystery which envelopes the truths of religion, and defying the keen researches of the human mind, humbles its aspiring pretensions. If the whole circle of religious truths were level to our comprehension, there would be no circumstance calculated to repress a proud confidence in our own powers and attainments. The virtues of submission and resignation would be stripped of their highest merit, if all the counsels and ways of God were perfectly clear and agreeable to our reason. As our Sovereign Lawgiver, God possesses a supreme claim, in the judgment even of human reason, to our obedience and our trust. And these virtues are most meritorious in the exercise, when his exactions are most mysterious, and his dispensations most dark.

Our Almighty Maker and Sovereign can never indeed require us to believe what directly contradicts that reason which he has given us to regulate our principles and to guide our conduct. Nor are any of the truths of religion contrary to reason. There may be something in them which human reason cannot fully discover; and of which therefore she is not a competent judge. For we cannot pronounce any truths contrary to reason, until we can completely discern them in all their relations and properties. Thus the doctrine of the Trinity, which the Church this day celebrates, though above the comprehension of reason, is in no respect contradictory to it. The mode of the ex-

istence of three persons in one God is utterly incomprehensible. But surely our knowledge of the divine mind, and of the essence and mode of existence of the infinite and eternal God, is too imperfect to authorize us to consider this union of three persons in one God impossible. We cannot therefore pronounce the doctrine contrary to reason.

Instead then of assailing the incomprehensible truths of revelation with presumptuous cavils, reason dictates that we consider them as the trial of our submission, and the test of our obedience. The human parent, in order to form his child to habits of submission, often requires obedience on the single ground of authority. And that child would deserve reprehension and punishment, who should refuse obedience until he comprehended the propriety of parental discipline, and the reasonableness of parental requisitions. And, my brethren, in reference to his almighty Parent, what are the highest wisdom, discernment and knowledge of man, but the ignorance, the weakness, and the folly of a child, "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God "."

III. Further. Certain truths of revelation being incomprehensible, constitutes no just objection to them; because the same objection applies with equal force to universally acknowledged truths.

c Rom. ix. 20.

If the objection of their being incomprehensible subverts some truths of revealed religion, it also subverts many other acknowledged truths. If, because they are incomprehensible, we become sceptics as to certain doctrines of revelation, consistency demands that we reject many others which reason admits. The mysteriousness which affects the credibility of the former assails also the credibility of the latter. On this subject, the argument is addressed not to him who doubts the sufficiency of the evidence of the divine origin of Christianity, but to him who, admitting the sufficiency of this evidence, doubts or rejects particular doctrines because they are incomprehensible. But on the same principle he would become a sceptic in regard to those truths of nature and religion which he does not hesitate to receive. He explores the recesses of nature; investigates her phenomena; and determines her laws. And does he never meet with any thing that baffles his researches? Has he penetrated the essences of things, and unfolded the reasons of their constitution and their various phenomena? Has he discovered the causes of those properties which give to matter its endless variety and use? "Has he entered into the springs of the sea? Has he walked in the search of the depth? Can he bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Has he perceived the breadth

of the earth? Let him declare if he knoweth it all d?" No! In his enquiries into nature, mystery has met him at every step. He has ascertained only the properties, the external appearances of the objects which surround him. The causes which produce these appearances, and the particular constitution of matter that gives rise to these properties, defy his research. But he does not doubt (this he would deem the highest folly) what he has ascertained, because he cannot ascertain all. He does not reject what is known, because much remains unknown.

Nor is it in the appearances of nature alone that we meet with mystery. Do we doubt the existence of the various faculties of the soul, because the mode of their operation, and the principle that connects them in one intellectual and moral agent, are inscrutable? Are we able to comprehend the fundamental truth of religion, the First Cause of all things, himself without cause, infinite in his nature, eternal in his existence, pervading all space! "Can we, by searching, find out God? Can we find out the Almighty unto perfection?" In regard to many truths of nature and religion, difficulties do not confound us; mysteries do not induce doubt. Is it not most extraordinary then, that in respect to other truths of religion, men should depart

d Job xxxviii. 16. 31. 18.

from those principles which, on all other occasions, regulate their belief, and reject doctrines sublime and consolatory in their tendency, because they transcend the comprehension of our finite minds?

IV. For, lastly -Though certain truths of religion be incomprehensible, their practical use and value are not thereby impaired.

Our sole business with the doctrines of revelation is to make them the guide of our principles and the rule of our conduct. Beyond these limits all is conjecture and speculation-speculation often presumptuous, and always fruitless. A survey of all the truths of God's word, would prove that the mystery which envelopes them, affects not their practical use and value, and that as far as they are designed to influence our principles and our conduct, they are simple and clear. Take, for instance, the corruption of human na-The existence of evil in the works of an infinitely powerful, holy, and good Being, is an inscrutable mystery. But satisfaction on this point is not necessary to the discharge of our duty; the mystery in which this truth is involved, does not affect its practical importance. All that is necessary for us to know in regard to this truth for the regulation of our conduct, is clearly revealed. Revelation teaches us, that though man is fallen and corrupt, God has provided a way for his recovery, and that every one

who in an humble sense of his unworthiness, turns to God by sincere repentance, and with faith in the merits of him whom God hath set forth as the Saviour of the world, shall be redeemed from the dominion of evil passions, and restored to virtue and to holiness.

In like manner with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. The union of three persons in one eternal essence is utterly incomprehensible. But still all that is necessary to our duty in regard to this truth, is clearly revealed, and may be easily understood. The distinction of persons in the Godhead, their respective attributes, their relations to each other and to us, and the offices which they sustain towards us, are all which it is necessary for us to know, for the regulation of our faith and our conduct; and these are plainly revealed. That God the Father is the fountain of the Deity-that God the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, deriving his nature from the Father in an incomprehensible mannerand that God the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son, are propositions which we can understand; though we cannot comprehend the mode in which the Son is begotten of the Father, and in which the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son. Mystery, let us not forget, necessarily involves every truth concerning the adorable nature of God. His infinity and his eternity are truths which

the objectors to the doctrine of the Trinity admit. But are they not as inscrutable as the eternal generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost? Who can conceive of a Being existing every where, without beginning and without end!

The practical nature and efficacy of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, are plainly set forth. We are taught that God the Father sustains to us the office of Creator and Preserver—that God the Son is our Saviour and Intercessorand that God the Holy Ghost is our Sanctifier and Comforter. We are enjoined to adore the Father, and to supplicate his protection and blessing; to trust in the Son, and to implore his mediation and intercession; and to invoke the sanctifying and consoling influences of the Holy Ghost. We are unable to comprehend the mode by which the power of the Father is exercised in our preservation; by which the mediation of the Son is rendered available to us; and by which the Holy Spirit influences our hearts. The mode of operation of the Divine Mind cannot be comprehended by any creature. But the distinctive offices of the three persons of the Godhead towards us, and our consequent duties, are brought down to the level of our understanding.

Let us not inconsistently reject these consolatory truths, because they are incomprehensible. Would it not be considered as the extreme of folly,

to refuse to apply the bodies around us to our comfort and advantage, because we cannot ascertain the causes of their respective properties and qualities? Shall we refrain from the use of food, because we cannot ascertain why it should nourish and support us? Shall we abstain from the pursuit of knowledge, because we are unable to ascertain the mode by which the mind receives ideas, and afterwards applies them, by the powers of induction and reasoning, to the purposes of truth and science? Let us not then absurdly and criminally reject the exalted blessings assured to us by the Trinity of persons in the Godheadthe protection and favour of the Father, without which we shall be miserable in time and in eternity; the mediation of the Son, through which alone we can escape the punishment due to our sins, and attain the joys of Heaven; and the sanctifying and comforting influences of the Holy Ghost, by which we are established in holiness and peace—Let us not reject these inestimable blessings, because we cannot comprehend the essence or existence of the divine agents from whom they proceed, or the mode by which they are conveyed to us.

My brethren—though the mode of union and existence of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead be incomprehensible, the practical truths and duties, connected with this doctrine, are in-

finitely important. They involve the means of our deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin, and of our restoration to holiness, to the favour of God, and to the happiness of Heaven. Ever then (and this day we have implored God for grace to do so' may we keep " stedfast in the faith of the eternal Trinity, and in power of the Divine Majesty worship the Unity"." The essence of the Godhead, the mode of existence of three persons in one God, these are not for us to know for "it is as high as heaven, what can we do? deeper than hell, what can we know?" "Who can by searching find out God?" But the offices and relations which the persons of the Trinity sustain towards us, and the exalted blessings which they dispense to us, these may be clearly understood. It is our duty, and it will prove our eternal perfection and happiness, to adore and serve God the Father; to take refuge in the mediation of God the Son; and to implore the sanctifying influences of God the Holy Ghost.

In that language which the Church hath provided, and it is the hymn of adoration with which the cherubim extol the infinite and eternal persons of the Godhead, and which will be the everlasting song of the redeemed when exalted to the Heavenly courts, let us now profess our

^{*} Collect for Trinity Sunday.

^p Job xi. 8.

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faith, and pour forth our praises,—" Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts—Heaven and earth are full of thy glory "." Honour and power, majesty and dominion, be now then ascribed unto the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three persons in one eternal Godhead.

^q Communion Service.

SERMON XI.

THE TRINITY.

[TRINITY SUNDAY.]

REV. iv. 8.

And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is, and is to come.

The sublime passage in the book of the Revelation, of which my text is part, our Church has selected as the epistle for the day. It exhibits a splendid representation of Jehovah in his sanctuary in the heavens, with the ministering spirits that surround him, and the worship which is rendered him. The whole scene is described in symbolical language; sensible and earthly figures affording the only idea of spiritual and celestial objects. The one eternal and almighty Jehovah, is represented as "seated on a throne, high and lifted up ";" and the effulgence of his glory, and the lustre which sur-

rounds him, are compared to the most splendid of material objects. "One sat on the thronelike a jaspar and sardine stone—and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald "-" and round about the throne were four and twenty elders," corresponding to the twenty-four courses of Priests in the Jewish temple, and emblematic of the Christian ministry - " and there were seven lamps of fire before the throne," symbolical of the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit of God. "And before the throne was a sea of glass like unto crystal," answering to the molten sea in the Jewish temple, in figures taken from which the sacred writers usually exhibit the sanctuary of heaven. "And in the midst of the throne and round about it," surrounding it in a circle, "were four beasts," or living creatures, "full of eyes before and behind "-these living creatures, agreeably to the representation in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel, denoting cherubims, angelic beings of the highest order; their "eyes before and behind" displaying their wisdom, knowledge, foresight and prudence. "And they rest not day nor night"—that is, without ceasing, or at stated and fit times-"saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come."

It is on account of this ascription of homage, in which setting forth, as is reasonably supposed, the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the epithet

"holy" is thrice repeated, that our Church selects it as the epistle for this day, in which she proposes to our consideration the great mystery of the Trinity—that "in the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons, of one substance, power and eternity: the Father, the Son. and the Holy Ghost."

Let us then, agreeably to her design, contemplate this doctrine as of fundamental importance in relation to our *faith*, our *obedience* and our *hopes*.

- I. By the evidences of its truth, it commands our faith.
- II. And by the powerful motives and consolations which it exhibits, it exalts our obedience and animates our hopes.
- I. The doctrine of the Trinity, by the evidences of its truth, commands our faith.

The evidences of this doctrine are founded on the plain declarations of the word of God; which proceeding from the Father of lights and Sovereign Ruler of the universe, are entitled to our implicit reverence; and which represent the one living and true God, as subsisting in three distinct persons or agents, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The divinity of the Father the first person of the Godhead, is universally acknowledged.

^b Articles of Religion, I.

The divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost it is necessary to establish.

With regard to the divinity of Jesus Christ, as the Son, our first inquiry is naturally directed to the terms in which he is set forth by the inspired prophets and holy men, who in the ages preceding his appearance, delineated his character and announced his advent. The prophet Jeremiah ascribed to him the divine title of "the Lord our rightcousness ... In proclaiming the joyful tidings, that unto guilty man "a child should be born, and a son should be given;" the prophet Isaiah ascribed to Jesus Christ titles with which it would have been impious to adorn a mere man—" wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the Father of the everlasting ages, the Prince of Peace." And his divine nature was proclaimed by the name, which according to the same prophet, he was to assume "Emanuel, God with us."

In the fulness of time, Jesus Christ, thus predicted as a divine personage, came into the world. Though for the great object of his coming, the redemption of man, he took upon him "the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man;" yet it is said that "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." When he considered himself according to his human genealogy the Son

of David, he declared "the Father is greater than I^d;" yet in his character, as a divine person, he pronounces, "I and my Father are one "." Indeed, to guard against the opinion that he was only the Son of David, he asserted that he was that "Lord of David," unto whom "the Lord said, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool "." Other messengers of God performed miracles, not in their own name, but in the name of God. But Jesus Christ in his own name, and by his own inherent power, performed divine and miraculous acts; and thus confirmed his own testimony of his divinity by the witness of God.

To his own declarations may be added those of the illustrious heratds of his salvation, who proclaimed him to the world as a divine personage. One apostle speaks of him, as "the Word who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God, the only begotten of the Father "." Another apostle celebrates him as "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person ";" as that glorious Being, to whom higher than the angels, the almighty Father saith, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever "."

Thus proclaimed by his apostles, the inspired historians of his life, and heralds of his character

d John xvi. 28. d John x. 30. Matt. xxii. 44, 45.

⁸ John i. 1. ^h Heb. i. 3. ⁱ Heb. i. 8.

and offices, as "the only begotten of the Father,"
"in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead,"
we find that universal nature is called to render
to him, that homage which is appropriate only to
the living and true God. At his name, every
knee "is required to bow, of things in heaven,
and things on earth, and things under the earth,
and every tongue is required to confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the
Father."

The divinity of Christ, thus set forth by his own declarations, and those of his Apostles, is still further established, by his having divine titles, attributes, and acts ascribed to him. The incredulity of Thomas was overcome by the irresistible evidence which the resurrection of his Master, who had claimed divine honours, afforded of the truth of his claims; and he cried out, in language which could not, without the greatest impiety, be addressed to any human being-" My Lord, and my God m." At that awful moment, when the Lord of Life only can hear and save, the martyr Stephen commended his departing spirit to Jesus Christ-" Lord Jesus, receive my spirit "." It was the voice of Jesus Christ whom the beloved Apostle heard saying-" I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty "." And it is Jesus Christ

^k Col. ii. 9. Philip. ii. 10, 11. Mohn xx. 28. Rev. i. 8.

who will display resistless evidence of his Divinity, at that day when "he shall come with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him?;" and they also, brethren, who deny him;—when he shall come—not as the first of created beings; for he shall have "on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords?."

But, in order to establish the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, it is necessary that we prove the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. And of this we have full evidence. He is united with the Father and the Son, as equally the object of faith and reverence, in the memorable commission of Christ to the Apostles-" Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'." He is styled "the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father';" and is also styled "the Spirit of the Son ';"—whence he is said to proceed from the Father and the Son. Divine attributes and acts are ascribed to him; for he is said to "teach all things"," and to "guide into all truth ";" to " search the deep things of Godx," and to "make intercession for us"." And he is styled the Spirit who "divideth to every man severally, as he will z," spiritual gifts. A person, to whom

y John xvi. 13. x 1 Cor. ii. 10.

y Rom. viii. 26.

² 1 Cor. xii. 11.

these divine acts and attributes are ascribed, must be God.

These, brethren, are only some of the leading authorities, which prove that the Son and the Holy Ghost, as distinct persons or agents, partake equally with the Father, of the glory and divinity of the Godhead, and with him constitute one living and true God.

They are distinct persons and agents; cause, we have seen that distinct titles, attributes, and acts, are ascribed to them. And they are divine persons; because divine titles, attributes, and acts, are also assigned to them. The declarations, which have been cited from Scripture, in their plain and literal meaning, so clearly sets forth the distinction and divinity of the Trinity of persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that if we suppose this doctrine to be erroneous, we must impute to the sacred writers an intention to mislead. For they undoubtedly use language which, apart from the influence of preconceived theory, and of refined and unauthorized criticism, would induce at once the impartial reader of their writings to believe, that they maintain the distinction and divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as persons of the Godhead. And yet, undoubtedly, there is but "one God." While then, in the words of the Church, in her collect for Trinity Sunday, " we acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, we must, in the power of the Divine Majesty, worship the Unity;"—the Trinity of persons, but the unity of essence in the Godhead.

We pretend not to bring this doctrine within the comprehension of human reason. But it is not difficult to understand, in this sublime mystery, all that is proposed to our belief, or that is to influence our practice. We can understand the propositions, that divine attributes are possessed by the three persons of the Godhead-Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that they sustain to us the important relations of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. God the Father, as our Creator and Preserver, is to be adored; his protection is to be invoked; and his blessing supplicated. God the Son, as our Mediator, is to receive our homage; and his merits are to be our only reliance for pardon; and his intercession we are to implore, as the only way of access to our offended God. And the Holy Ghost we are to revere, as our Sanctifier and Comforter; and we are to invoke his grace, and to seek his heavenly consolations. And in this Trinity of persons we are to worship the unity of essence, the one living and true God.

In respect, then, to the character and offices of the three persons of the Godhead, and the relations which they sustain to us, and the corresponding duties which we owe them, there is not any thing which is unintelligible. But when we seek to comprehend what we are not required to believe—that *essence* in which, and the *mode* by which, the three persons are united in one

God—then, indeed, we are involved in perplexity. But surely we should act unreasonably in rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity, because we are unable to conceive of the essence or of the manner of subsistence of the three persons of the Godhead.

We shall immediately perceive the presumption and absurdity of rejecting whatever is incomprehensible, if we apply this principle in all other cases.

Thus we are acquainted with the properties and effects of matter. But we cannot comprehend what produces these properties, and why particular organizations of matter should assume particular appearances, and produce particular effects. We should think it absurd, on this account, to disbelieve the existence of these properties, and the production of these effects.

Again—we cannot comprehend the nature of the human soul, and its connection with the body. But who thinks, on this account, of doubting the existence of soul, and its connection with the human frame?

Further—we can understand what is meant by the *Providence of God*—that the Maker of the world is also its Governor—that he who is infinitely wise and good, omniscient and almighty, superintends all the works of his hands, and overrules the actions of intelligent creatures to his own wise and good purposes. But still "clouds

and darkness" surround the ways of the Almighty; and we are unable to conceive in what manner he can be every where present, discerning and ruling all things; or by what means he controls the actions of men, and yet leaves them perfectly free in all their volitions. But because these points relative to the Providence of God are inscrutable, we should act most unreasonably in denying or rejecting the Divine government.

Even the fundamental truth of the being of a God defies our comprehension. We know indeed what is meant by the proposition that God is the cause, the Maker of all things, without beginning and without end, infinite and eternal. We can understand the nature of his attributes, his omniscience, his omnipresence, his holiness, his justice and his goodness. But we cannot comprehend the nature or the essence of this spiritual Being, nor conceive how he can be without beginning or without end. Our finite understandings cannot grasp the ideas of infinity and eternity, nor reconcile many facts and events of the moral universe with the attributes of its beneficent Ruler. But shall we therefore embrace the gloomy creed of the Atheist; and doubting or rejecting the existence of a God, leave the world and its origin and destiny to the control of chance?

Let us carry this analogy into a subject that comes even more strongly home to our own feelings. That Gospel which has brought life and immortality to light, assures us of the truth which reason suggests and confirms, that our incorruptible souls, boundless in their desires and exalted in their powers, are designed to live for ever in glory and bliss. But because we cannot accurately nor fully conceive the mode of existence of the soul in a future state, nor all its exalted occupations and joys, shall we act wisely or rationally in rejecting the hopes of immortality, and bounding our views and enjoyments with the grave!

This principle, brethren, of rejecting whatever is in any degree incomprehensible, would lead us into universal and dreary scepticism.

This is not the course which reason prescribes. She calls us to examine the evidences of that religion which claims a divine origin; and when satisfied of its divinity, dictates to us implicitly to receive the doctrines which it contains. For though it is impossible that they can contradict that reason which is the candle of the Lord shining in the soul, yet relating to spiritual and eternal objects, they must necessarily transcend the comprehension of our finite understandings. There is an obvious distinction between things transcending our reason, and contradicting it. Thus the manner in which the three persons of the Trinity are united in one God, reason is unable to comprehend, and therefore she cannot pronounce the doctrine absurd or contradictory; because of what transcends her comprehension she cannot be a competent judge.

That homage, obcarence, and taith are to be rendere i to the Son and to the Holy Chost, conjointly with the Father, is proved by the plainest declarations of the sacred volume. Into the belief of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. God subsisting in a Trinity of persons, we are baptized—as the fundamental truth of that religion the profession of which we assume at baptism. It has been the doctrine of the great body of Christians in all ages and in all places. It is the doctrine which Holy Martyrs and Confessors defended by their labours and consecrated by their blood. For in the midst of the flames, and of the tortures by which their faith was tried, it was their triumph and their consolation to proclaim the glory of that God who reconciled them to himself by the blood of his Son, and sanctified them by the grace of his Holy Spirit. In the courts of the New Jerusalem, they will unite in the song of the thousand thousands around the throne—" Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come."

This doctrine, then, revealed in Scripture, commands our faith. Our faith in it, on the authority of God, is a moral duty, and unbelief a crime, by which we shall incur guilt and become obnoxious to punishment.

This doctrine will appear even more important if we consider it as a practical doctrine.

II. For by the powerful motives and consolations which it exhibits, it exalts our obedience and animates our hopes.

The Gospel, if its Author were not a divine person, would not be armed with such powerful energy, nor exhibit such attractive lustre. But its doctrines proceeded from lips full of grace and truth; from that sublime personage in whom dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead"." Thus enforced and tendered, they make their way to the heart, as well to the understanding, "bringing down every high imagination, and every thing which exalteth itself against God"."

The most powerful motives to obedience which can be presented to us, result from the perfections of God, from the terrors of his justice, and the attractions of his love. The doctrine of the Trinity affords the most animating motives to his service, by the illustrious view which it affords of these perfections. For in the person of the Son of God, made flesh to redeem us, "mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other." The violated law of God required that atonement which man could not render; which Cherubina

^a Col. i. 19.

and Seraphim were unable to offer. But in the Son of God, to whose sufferings and death, in our nature, his divinity gave an efficacy all-sufficient to take away the sins of the world; what a tremendous display, of the inflexible severity and justice of God, to be satisfied but by the death of an Almighty victim! And what an affecting exhibition of Divine love which prompted God the Father to give for us his only Son; and which led this almighty personage to encounter for us the sorrows of the world, the persecution of the ungodly, and the death of the cross! What restraints from sin, what motives to obedience are here made to operate! If God spared not his own Son, when he was the representative of our guilt, will he spare the presumptuous transgressor? And shall we not love him who thus loved us, and devote ourselves to the service of him who washed us from our sins in his own blood?

If he who made the atonement were a mere man, and the Saviour of sinners were not the Son of God, this illustrious view of the Divine perfections would not be exhibited, nor these affecting motives to obedience be displayed.

If the sufferer had been a man, the drops of blood which were shed in the garden, and the agonies which were sustained on the cross, would not have made an all-sufficient atonement for sin. The death of one sinner could not take

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away the sin of others; for by his own transgressions his life was forfeited. Even the most perfect creature can offer no meritorious virtue to compensate for the failings of others; for in proportion to the rank which he holds in the scale of creation, is the service which he owes to his Creator, by whom he has thus been exalted. No—the blood which was shed as an atonement, was shed in our nature by the Son of the Highest; and therefore it was all-sufficient to take away the sins of the world.

Jesus Christ is declared to be the "way of access unto the Father"," through whose intercession only we can come unto that almighty Sovereign whom we have offended. But with what confidence can we look up to the throne of the Eternal, if that intercessor who is to plead for our pardon and procure our acceptance, be a frail and fallible creature; who has no meritorious services, with which to enforce his intercession; and whose imperfections need that intercession which he proffers to us?

But when we believe that our intercessor, though as man, is "touched with a feeling for our infirmities"," as God, is "mighty to save"—and that the intercession, on which we are to place our hopes, is enforced by the perfections and merits of an almighty Mediator; the gloom of

guilt is dispelled from our bosoms; the pangs of remorse which agitate our souls are soothed; and we indeed rejoice in God as our reconciled God and Father in Jesus Christ.

To the influences of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel directs us to look for deliverance from the dominion of sin, for succour under temptation, and for strength and support in the practice of virtue. "Ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified" saith the apostle, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God E." Is this Spirit a created agent? And is a created agent equal to the almighty work of redeeming us from the bondage of sin; of infusing into our minds good desires, and enabling us to bring the same to good effect; of dispersing from our understanding the illusions of error, and enlightening us in divine truth; of arming us with strength to overcome the world; and of renewing our corrupt nature after the image of God? If the Holy Ghost be a created agent, all our hopes of illumination, sanctification and holiness must prove vain. But when we are assured that a divine person, even one of the persons of the Godhead, the Spirit of the Father and the Son will translate us from the bondage of sin, and sanctify us in soul and body; we rise superior to all doubts, we surmount all difficulties; we become conquerors.

—For our Guide, Sanctifier and Comforter is almighty.

And, when we look to the region of the grave, and to the world that lies beyond it, we must have some agitating apprehensions as to our destiny in it. Ah—when we pass through the grave to an eternal world, who can guide and save us but an almighty Redeemer—one who "holds the keys of death and hell;" who has vanquished the king of terrors; and who has promised to lead his faithful followers through the grave and gate of death to a joyful resurrection, to an inheritance of glory that fadeth not away.

My brethren, the pardon of our sins; our deliverance from their dominion; peace of conscience; progress in virtue and holiness; the favour of God; the hope of everlasting bliss are blessings without which no earthly joys can yield us consolation. And they are blessings assured to us by the doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, which makes us the subjects of the grace and mercy of God the Father, through the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ, by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. Let us then stedfastly profess this true faith, which is the source to us of these inestimable blessings, and acknowledge with reverence and humility "the glory of the eternal Trinity." In the Holy Supper, let us unite in that

sublime ascription of praise, by which the Church on earth responds to the Church triumphant—and "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, laud and magnify the Lord God of Hosts, who is one God, one Lord, not only one person, but three persons in one substance—For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality "."

Blessed with the love of God the Father; justified by the merits of God the Son; and sanctified and comforted by God the Holy Ghost, we shall pass the time of our sojourning here in peace, in resignation and in hope. We shall advance from strength to strength through increasing stages of divine truth and virtue, until we arrive at that heavenly kingdom, where all the doubts which attend this state of imperfect knowledge shall terminate; and all the sorrows of this course of our probation be swallowed up, in the enjoyment of the glories of the Godhead. In the courts of the celestial Zion, we shall join with the spirits of the just made perfect, and with the innumerable company of heaven, in the hymn of adoration and praise -Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come.

h Communion Service.

Let then the strains of the Church on earth respond to those of the Church in heaven, and let us ascribe unto God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three persons but one God, all power, might, majesty and dominion, world without end.

SERMON XII.

THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, AS SET FORTH IN THE NICENE CREED.

[A CHRISTMAS SERMON.]

1 John iv. 9.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

This, my brethren, was that act of infinite love which we this day commemorate in the services of the Church.

It must be obvious that the manifestation of the love of God, depends upon the dignity of the person whom he sent into the world. The more exalted the nature of him whom God sent, and the more intimate the relation which he sustains to the Infinite Being by whom he was commissioned, the greater the love displayed in the act of his mission for our salvation.

If the personage styled in my text "the onlybegotten Son of God," sustained no higher relation to his Almighty Father, than that of the

most perfect of men, or of the highest of created beings, where would have been the peculiar love of God in this mode of our redemption? For, it must be observed, that not only the act of our redemption, but the mode by which it was effected in the dignity of the personage who became our Redeemer, is most strongly insisted on in the sacred writings as peculiarly manifesting the love of God for us. "God so loved the world," said Christ, "that he gave his only-begotten Son a." And, in the words of my text, still more emphatically-" In this was manifested the love of God for us, because that God sent his onlybegotten Son into the world that we might live through him." In reference then to the mode of our redemption, our estimate of the love of God must be proportioned to the dignity of the personage by whom it was effected, and to the nearness of his relation to the Almighty Being by whom he was commissioned.

It is necessary therefore, my brethren, in order to raise in your minds a due sense of the love of God, in sending his only-begotten Son to be our Redeemer, to ascertain the nature and dignity of him who was thus sent. The due estimate of the nature and dignity of Jesus Christ, is a point, also, intimately connected with our comfort, our virtue, and our salvation. For if he, whom God sent to be our Saviour, is divine

^a John iii. 16.

in his nature and dignity, what full consolation have we in fleeing for refuge to him; what incentives to holiness in the view of his infinite condescension, and of the efficacy of his grace; and how great must be our guilt, if in stripping him of his divine honours, we "deny the Lord who bought us"."

Let us then, as a point of fundamental importance, direct our attention to the *nature and dignity* of him, whom God hath sent, as at this time, to be our *Saviour*.

In the creed, called the Nicene Creed, which has this day been recited in the service of the Church, and which has been handed down to us from the early ages of Christianity, we profess our belief in "the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." The meaning and the authority for these declarations, you ought to understand, since you are called on by the Church to make them in the profession of your faith. It is proper, therefore, to explain and to defend them.

It is not a sufficient objection to these expressions, that we cannot comprehend them—that we cannot determine how the ideas which they convey, can be true. Can we comprehend

^b 2 Peter ii. 1.

the propositions-God is a spirit-God is infinite-God is eternal? Can we tell in what consists the essence of a spirit? Can we determine how it is possible for a Being to be infinite; unbounded in his nature, and existence? Or can we grasp the idea of an eternal Being; of a Being who always existed, and who will never cease to exist? We may understand what is meant by these terms; but we cannot comprehend how that meaning can be true. For example—we can understand what is meant by the proposition, "God is a spirit;" that is, a being divested of all corporeal properties; but we cannot comprehend the mode of the existence of a spirit. We may understand what is meant by an infinite and eternal Being, a Being unbounded in his nature, and endless in his duration; but we cannot comprehend how that nature can be boundless, how that existence can be eternal. And yet, shall we disbelieve because we cannot comprehend the spirituality, the infinity, and the eternity of God? And shall we disbelieve the propositions concerning the nature of the only-begotten Son of God, because we cannot comprehend them? Let us be guided in this last case as in the former, by the dictates of sound reason. We believe, on sufficient evidence, the spirituality, the infinity, and the eternity of God; even though we cannot comprehend these truths. And, on the same principle.

we ought to believe whatever is revealed in the sacred writings concerning the divinity of Christ, even though this, like every other truth relative to the divine nature, be past our finding out.

Nor is it a valid objection to the expressions in the Nicene Creed concerning the nature of Jesus Christ, that many of them are not to be found in Scripture. It is sufficient if the truths which those expressions convey be there de-The doctrines of salvation are not arranged in the sacred writings in the forms and in the language of system. A systematic digest of the truths of Scripture was to be the work of man's industry, and the test of his sincerity. And human expressions in the enunciation of those truths were rendered necessary by the perversions and evasions of heretics in the use of the language of Scripture. Against these perversions and evasions were the expressions of the Nicene Creed directed, with regard to the nature of Jesus Christ.

Our single inquiry then should be—whether the declarations of that Creed which the Church receives, relative to the nature of Jesus Christ, be sanctioned by the sacred writings.

That the *Nicene* faith concerning the nature of Jesus Christ is the faith of the Holy Scriptures, we have a presumptive evidence which amounts, it may be said, to moral certainty. This Creed was set forth in the very commencement of the

fourth century by a council held at Nice, which embraced Bishops from every part of the Christian world. The commonly received faith relative to the divinity of the Son being denied by Arius and his followers, who attributed only in a qualified sense divine perfections to the Son, and denied his eternity, it was the object of the Nicene fathers to confirm the sense of Scripture on this subject, by an appeal to the faith of the preceding ages, traced back to the time of the Apostles. And with singular unanimity, of more than three hundred Bishops, only four or five dissented from those expressions of the Creed in which the council declared agreeably, in their views, to Scripture and the testimony of the preceding ages, the divine person, dignity and relation of the Son.

On this subject there is the highest probability, amounting, we may say, to moral certainty, that the council did not err. Not that we would claim for it papal infallibility. We allow that those who composed it were fallible men; and we found our confidence in the correctness of the Creed which they set forth on the principles of human nature. All that we claim for them is, that they were honest in their intentions, and possessed the capacity of judging of historical documents, and of the weight due to traditional testimony; and we then consider them as credible witnesses to a matter of fact. The fact to which they bore their unanimous testimony was, that

the Church from the age of the Apostles had received, on the authority of Scripture, those views of the divinity of Jesus Christ which they set forth in the Creed called from the place where they assembled, the *Nicene* Creed.

We ask then—Is it probable, that a large number of Bishops from every part of the Christian world, assembled in the beginning of the fourth century, with ample historic documents and oral tradition, could have almost unanimously erred in their statement of the faith of the preceding ages on that fundamental point of the person and dignity of Jesus Christ? The supposition would be at variance with all the known principles of human nature, and with all the laws of human testimony. We may then proceed one step further and ask-If the Nicene Fathers exhibited correctly the faith of the Church from the Apostolic age, professing every where, always, among all, the divinity of Jesus Christ as by them declared -could this have been the faith of the Church universal in the three first centuries, and this faith not be sanctioned by Scripture? The supposition involves the highest absurdity. the great body of Christians in all places and in every period of the first three centuries, with all the lights of Scripture beaming fresh upon them, with all the corroborating testimony of Apostolic tradition, erred in their statements of a fundamental article of the Christian faith; what hope can

there be that it is possible for any man, or set of men, to ascertain the sense of the Sacred Volume? It is, indeed, a sealed book.

Considering then that Creed, which you have this day recited, not as the imposition of a small assembly of private Christians, at some distant period from the Apostolic era, but as the declaration of the universal Church of that faith, which she traced back through only three centuries, to the age of inspiration, we should approach it with a reverence only inferior to that which we render to the Sacred Volume, on which it professes to be founded. And it would appear at variance with that deference, which reason demands for the authority of credible witnesses, to reject the declarations which this Creed contains, concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ; until honestly and faithfully exercising that right of private judgment, which no individual can surrender to any human tribunal, we are fully satisfied that these declarations are not founded in Scripture.

Remembering then, that this is a subject on which Revelation only can speak, and in regard to which reason has no other office than to ascertain and obey her voice, let us proceed to examine, whether the following views of the person and dignity of Jesus Christ, which are set forth in the Nicene Creed, and also in the Articles and Liturgy of our Church, are sustained by Scripture.

- I. Jesus Christ, as the Son, is God—in the language of the Nicene Creed and of the Articles, "of one substance with the Father," "very and eternal God."
- II. He derives his divine nature from the Father, in an incomprehensible manner; which derivation the Scripture denotes by the terms, begotten, only begotten Son—and which the Nicene Creed exhibits by the expressions—" begotten, not made—God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God."
- III. This incomprehensible derivation of the divine nature of the Son from the Father, styled his generation, is from all eternity; so that the Son was always one with the Father in the eternal Godhead—which eternal derivation is expressed in our Articles, "begotten from everlasting of the Father;" and, in the Nicene Creed, "begotten of his Father before all worlds."

The Divinity, and the Eternal Generation of him, whose incarnation we this day celebrate, are the truths which we are called to believe, on the authority of the word of God. Incomprehensible, indeed, they are; but so, let us never for a moment forget, must be all truths which respect the Divine Nature.

I. Jesus Christ, as the Son, is God—in the language of the Nicene Creed, and of the Articles, "of one substance with the Father," "very and eternal God."

The proof that Jesus Christ, as the Son, partakes of the substance, the essence, the incomprehensible nature, whatever it may be, of the Godhead, we might rest on that single passage of Scripture, in which the Apostles were commissioned to "baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost d." In whose name should the nations be baptized, but in that of the living God, to whose service they were thus consecrated? Yet that living God is spoken of, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Could these terms denote, according to the heresy of the Sabellians, only three different characters and names of the one God? But what confusion of ideas would this supposition involve! Father and Son are terms denoting the same nature, indeed, but distinct and real subsistences or persons—spiritual agents having distinct faculties or properties. Can the language of inspiration be confused and inappropriate? No—it must be clear and apposite. The terms, Father and Son, in relation to the Godhead, authorize us, therefore, to believe, that they are distinct and real subsistences or persons, with faculties or properties distinguishable from each

d Matt. xxviii. 19.

other; and yet, that the Son must be of the same nature with the Father; and same numerical nature, since there can be but one living and true God. The Father is confessedly God, possessing the divine nature. The Son must, therefore, partake of the same nature, must be very God.

The same truth appears from other passages of the sacred writings, where the Son, as "the Word was God d." His appearance is spoken of as the appearance of "our great God and Saviour "." He is styled " God over all," (which is the title of the supreme God) "blessed for ever more f;" whose "throne is for ever and ever";" "being in the form of God!." Te divine attributes of eternity, and of omniscience, and of omnipotence, are ascribed to him, being "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ';" " knowing the hearts of all men;" "searching the reins, and the hearts "," "upholding by the word of his power all things";" that universe, which, by his power, he had created, and coming as that Lord who can "make manifest the counsels of the heart to judge the world "." Well might he, to whom divine attributes and acts

d John i. 1. ° Tit. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 7.

^g Heb. i. 8. h Philip. ii. 6.

^k Acts i. 24. Rev. ii. 23.

f Rom. ix. 5.
i Heb. xiii. 8.

^m Heb. i. 3.

ⁿ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

are thus ascribed, claim for himself divine honours, requiring "all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father "." Well might an expiring martyr commend to him, its Creator, his departing spirit, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit P!" And well may the angels in heaven, "the thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand" ascribe to him "power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing q." For he is that Jesus who, as the very and eternal God declares, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be "."-" I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty's." But-

II. Jesus Christ as the Son, the very and eternal God, derives his divine nature from the Father in an incomprehensible manner; denoted in Scripture by the terms "begotten, only-begotten Son;" and in the Nicene Creed, by the terms "begotten, not made; God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God."

Jesus Christ is, in various respects in Scripture styled "the Son," "begotten." But mark

^o John v. 23.

^p Acts vii. 59.

^q Rev. v. 12.

^e Rev. i. 11. 17.

the force of the term "only-begotten," also applied to him in my text. Not merely as born of a Virgin by the power of the Holy Ghost, is Christ styled the only-begotten Son of God-because in this sense, as born by a miraculous agency of the Almighty, Adam is styled "the Son of God'." Nor could be be the only-begotten Son of God in his office as Mediator, our Prophet, Priest and King-because, to this office he was commissioned; and in this sense he resembled many who were anointed to be kings and prophets and priests to the people of God. Nor can he be considered as the only-begotten Son of God, in reference to his resurrection as the Son of Man-because in this sense he was merely "the first-born among many brethren";" all the children of the resurrection being, in this respect, the sons of God. Nor can he be the only-begotten Son of God by his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on High, and made Heir of all things. For all the faithful are joint Heirs with him *; and, in this sense, are Sons of God.

The phrase, "only-begotten Son of God," must denote, then, the peculiar and incomprehensible mode in which he derived his divine nature from the Father. Before he was the Son of Man, he was, in the language of the apostles,

God's "only-begotten, who was in the bosom of the Father;" and whose glory is that of "the only-begotten of the Father." The term Son, in the commission, expressing the Trinity of persons; must have reference to a divine personage, and yet denotes a peculiar mode of derivation of his divine existence from the Father, which peculiar mode of derivation, for want of a word more intelligible, is expressed by the terms "begotten, only-begotten." The fact of this derivation is revealed—the mode is incomprehensible.

We see, then, the propriety of the terms of the Nicene Creed. The Son is God; but deriving his nature from the Father, he is styled "God of God." As an apt illustration, the Son of God is styled "Light of Light." Like the material light which proceeds from the sun, but exists at the same moment with it, he was always "the brightness of the Father's glory "." And he is very God; but derivatively; and therefore, styled "very God of very God."

And yet, lest his derivative existence might imply an inferiority, incompatible with that divine nature which the Son possesses, it is necessary that we should believe—

III. Lastly, that this incomprehensible deri-

John i. 18. John i. 14. Heb. i. 3.

vation of the divine nature of the Son from the Father is from all eternity; so that the Son was always "one with the Father in the eternal Godhead." This eternal generation conformably to the language of Scripture, is expressed in our Articles and in the Nicene Creed, by the phrases—"begotten from everlasting of the Father;"—"begotten of his Father before all worlds."

This eternity of the generation of the Son necessarily results from the eternity of his nature. The Godhead is eternal. The Son therefore, possessing the nature of the Godhead, must have possessed it from all eternity; must have been always one with the Father. The attribute of eternity is a necessary attribute of the Son as God, and is expressly ascribed to him, as has been shown, in the sacred writings. And therefore being eternal, and also begotten of the Father, he must have been begotten from everlasting, or "before all worlds." This expression is synonymous with eternity; since there was no being existing before the worlds, but the eternal God.

In this doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, there is a mystery—an awful mystery but no contradiction. As it regards human relations it would be indeed contradictory and absurd to make the existence of the Son coeval

with the Father. But who so perfectly understands the Divine essence, as to pronounce it contradictory and impossible that the existence of the zon, as a person of the Godhead, should be coeval with that of the Father; that the communication of the divine nature from the Father to the Son should be from everlasting? The great error and the great source of unbelief, in regard to the mysteries of the Trinity, consist in judging of the Divine mind from created minds; and in pronouncing impossible with respect to the Godhead, which, as we know nothing concerning it, except as revealed to us, cannot be the subject of our judgment, that, which, in reference to the human mind and to human relations of which we have cognizance we know to be impossible.

But this is not acting according to the dictates of right reason. Unable as she is to comprehend many things which fall immediately within the sphere of her observation, she must deem it presumptuous to search out the nature of the infinite God. That nature can be known and must be adored by us only as it is revealed.

A divine person, a spiritual agent is spoken of in Scripture under the title of the Son. He is ranked with the Father and the Holy Ghost as one of the three persons who constitute the one living and true God. Divine titles and attributes and acts are ascribed to him, and divine nonours rendered to him. Very and eternal God, he yet, from all eternity, derives his Divine nature, in an incomprehensible manner, from the Father, so that he is "the only-begotten Son of God."

These are the truths revealed concerning the Son, who as at this time, for us men and for our salvation, became incarnate. We may understand these truths, though we may not, and indeed cannot, comprehend how they can be. But claiming our belief on the testimony of that God to whom we owe the submission of our understandings, as well as the obedience of our lives, it is surely our duty to believe them-we reject them at our peril. But let us remember, it is not sufficient that we acknowledge and adore Jesus Christ as the supreme God. We must acknowledge and adore him as "the only-begotten Son of God," whose nature is eternally communicated to him from the Father. His eternal generation, as well as his divine nature, must be acknowledged; because both are revealed. With the mode of derivation, and with the mode by which three distinct and divine agents subsist in one substance, one infinite and eternal essence, we have nothing to do. The Divine mind we can never find out. Our concern is with the practical results of these great mysteries.

One of these results is stated in the text, and has, I trust, this day been the subject of your grateful celebrations. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." The Godhead must be infinitely removed from all human relations and all corporeal emotions and passions. But between the eternal Father, and the eternal Son, the sacred writings authorize the rational belief that there subsists an affection analagous to that which connects a human father with a human son, but infinitely and incomprehensibly purer in its nature, and more exalted in degree. The Son is frequently styled the "beloved and the well-beloved Son" of the Father .- "Herein then is the love of God manifested." "God sent his Son'- that Son whom, from all eternity, he loved with an affection, pure and exalted as his own holy and infinite nature—with an affection as far transcending any human love, as the nature of the Godhead transcends the nature of man .-"God sent his Son," to veil his eternal glories in our nature; to dwell among us, bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows, in poverty and in ignominy; exposed to scoffs, to calumnies, to persecutions; pouring forth his soul in agony; yielding up his life in an ignominious and excruciating death. Angels cannot tell the greatness of that love which prompted the Father thus to give his eternal Son—Cherubim and Seraphim are unable to comprehend it. What deep and fervent emotions of gratitude should this manifestation of the love of God excite in our breasts!

For, my brethren, God sent his Son "that we might live through him'--that, doomed on account of our sins to sorrow and to death, we might, through his merits and grace, be restored to a life of holiness, of peace, of eternal felicity. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son b." The Son, only begotten of the Father, very and eternal God, is our Saviour and Redeemer, the Author to us of everlasting salvation. What strong confidence, what full consolation, what triumphant hopes, should the consideration of the Divine dignity and glory of the Saviour inspire in the hearts of those who believe in him! No longer veiled from mortal vision—with reverence be it spoken—the perfections of the Godhead, are manifested and engaged, in the person of Jesus Christ, for their guidance, their protection, their eternal felicity. But what must be our guilt, and what should be our punishment, if we reject the wonderful counsel of God for our salvation; if, insensible to that display of his infinite love in the gift of his eternal Son for our redemption, we continue in those

sins from which he came to redeem us! God hath pronounced (and hath he said and shall it not come to pass) that "there remains for us only a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation"."

Oh!—let us then remember, that the love of the eternal Father, in giving his only-begotten and well beloved Son to be the Saviour of our fallen race, is a mystery which should excite our humble reverence, our fervent gratitude, our devout and holy love. And let us "with angels and archangels, and all the company of Heaven, laud and magnify the name of our God." For "herein was his love manifested towards us, because he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him!"

° Heb. x. 27.

SERMON XIII.

THE SON, THE CREATOR AND RELER OF THE WORLDS.

[A CHRISTMAS SERMON.]

HEBREWS i. 1-12.

- 1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets,
- 2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
- 3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- 4. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
- 5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?
- 6. And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

9. Thou hast loved rightcous, and hated iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

- 11. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a garment;
- 12. And as a cesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

My Brethren—if we regard only the external circumstances of the event which we this day celebrate, we shall be at a loss to perceive in what respects it is worthy of being hailed as "glad tidings of great joy." In the stable at Bethlehem, the birth-place of Jesus Christ; in the manger, which received him as a cradle; in the obscure Virgin, the espoused wife of a poor Nazarene; and in the helpless infant, whom she cherished; we do not behold any thing calculated to awaken our wonder, or call forth our triumph.

But the word of God sheds, on this scene of humiliation, the splendour of divine glory. He, who was ushered into the world amidst every circumstance of humility and poverty, is set forth in the inspired records as the Son of God, the Creator and Lord of the worlds, the God whose throne is for ever and ever. For thus are his divine nature and his divine character displayed, in that sublime passage which has been recited as the epistle for the day.

Your attention cannot be more profitably occupied than with the view of the nature and character of the blessed Personage, whose nativity you this day celebrate, as they are displayed in the eloquent language of the Apostle.

The fallen condition of man required the interposition of divine revelation to rescue him from ignorance and sin, and to teach him truths infinitely interesting to him, as a spiritual and immortal being. It was the all-wise counsel of God, accommodated to the nature and condition of man, gradually to lead him through successive and increasing degrees of light, to the full splendour of the spiritual day, in the rising of the Son of righteousness.

"God," therefore, "spake at sundry times, and in divers manners, unto the fathers by the prophets."

Enoch, who walked with God; Noah, the preacher of righteousness; Abraham, emphatically styled the "friend of God", successively announced his will; until Moses, a more

² James ii. 23.

distinguished prophet, gave his statutes and ordinances unto Israel. Succeeding prophets were inspired to proclaim God's threats, to convey his promises, and to reveal his pleasure to the chosen people at "sundry times." And all these revelations were made "in divers manners;" sometimes in plain language, but most frequently in types and figures, in symbolical actions, and dark sayings, suited to the imperfect character of these previous revelations which were only "a shadow of good things to come b."

But in these "last times," saith the Apostle, the time which was to be distinguished by the "last" dispensation of God's will, he "hath spoken unto us" by a greater than a prophet; by "his Son."

Here opens upon us the divine nature of him, by whom God hath made the last revelation of his will. He is styled emphatically "God's Son." If he were the Son of God only in the same sense of accommodation, by which men and angels, as deriving their being from God, are sometimes called the sons of God, the object of the Apostle in proving the superior excellence of the Gospel dispensation, from the more exalted dignity of its author, would be defeated. In this sense of accommodation the *prophets* who spake unto the Fathers, might be styled the sons of God.

Where then, would be the superiority of the Gospel dispensation to those which preceded it? But he who now spake was superior to the prophets who spake unto the Fathers. He was in a higher, a peculiar sense the Son of God.

The divine dignity and power implied in this title, are set forth in the next words-" Whom he hath appointed heir of all things"-"The heir (saith the Apostle in another passage ',) is Lord of all." He enters into the full possession of the inheritance. Universal dominion is thus ascribed to the "Son"—and to the Son in his character as Mediator, as the Saviour of the human race, "Emmanuel d," "God manifest in the flesh e." To this heirship, to this universal dominion he was "appointed." He was constituted "Lord of all things," in his capacity as Mediator, and as the reward of his sufferings as our Redcemer. But in his character as Son he must previously have possessed, by virtue of his union with the Godhead, this universal dominion; or he could not have been invested with it, in his human nature. A mere man-swaying the sceptre of universal dominion; controlling the movements of the worlds; ruling the hosts of angels, of men, of all created beings; thus exercising the powers of omnipotence and omnipresence-a mere man, capable of all this! My brethren-it is impossible. The supposition is blasphemous. No

e Heb. i. 2. d Mat. i. 23. e 1 Tim. iii. 16.

—the Son was indeed in his human nature vested with universal dominion—but he could not have been thus constituted, if he had not been in his divine nature "Lord of all."

And he was rightfully the Proprietor, the Lord of all things—for all things were made by him. The Apostle adds—"by whom also God made the worlds." If he made the worlds, it is evident that he must have existed before they were made. And he must have existed in the Godhead, partaker of the Divine nature; for none but a Divine Being could "speak the word, and they were made; could command and they were created."

And that he was a Divine Being, the next words in this passage declare, in which he is styled "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person."

"The brightness of the Father's glory"—the glory of the Father beams for ever in the Son—the Father as the source of light, the Son as the ray that proceeds from it. Thus in condescension to our weak capacities, does the language of inspiration convey to us an idea of the nature of the Son of God and of his relation to the Father. As the ray of light is of the same substance with the luminous body from which it issues, and they never exist apart; and as the effulgence springs forth in the same instant that the luminous body is produced from which it emanates;

so the Son of God is of the same nature, and of the same eternal existence with the Father: still, however, eternally deriving from the Father his divine nature—"the brightness of the Father's glory," or as the Nicene Creed denotes the nature of Jesus Christ—"Light of light."

The apostle again styles him "the express image of his (the Father's) person." In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, shone forth all the excellences and attributes of God the Father. The one is a perfect resemblance of the other. The derivation of the attributes of the Son from the Father is here denoted; but the sameness of nature is also asserted. For it is impossible that any created being can be the express image of God, can possess or exhibit those divine attributes, that divine glory which Jehovah giveth not to another.

The glorious personage, who is thus clothed with divine attributes, (we are told) "upholds all things by the word of his power." His divine power executes the purposes of his wisdom and will, in the preservation and government of those worlds which he created, and of all that they contain. This universal and almighty sovereignty, in sustaining and governing all things, cannot be exercised by any being inferior to Him who created all things, and who possesses the perfections necessary to the government of all things, infinite wisdom and almighty

power. This sovereignty, therefore, truly appertains to the divine nature of Jesus Christ, but was specially appropriated to him in his character as man, when, having "purged our sins," "for this suffering of death," by which our sins were expiated, he was exalted in his glorified human nature, to a state of infinite and eternal dignity in heaven, "sitting down," as the apostle says, "on the right hand of the Majesty on High."

The apostle proceeds—"Being made so much better than the angels," that is, advanced in his human nature to a state of glory, so much more exalted than that of angels, "as he hath by inheritance," by descent, "obtained a more excellent name than they;" being, by inheritance, by descent, the Son of God.

"For," as the apostle continues to argue, "unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" This is the language prophetically applied to the Messiah in the second Psalm, the "day" having reference to the day of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, by which his being the Son of God was demonstrated to the world. Though the angels are sometimes called the sons of God, yet to which of them did he ever apply so emphatically this title? "And again," which of them did he bring into so intimate a relation to him as he did that personage to whom in the person of Solomon, as a type, he says,

"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."

"And again," argues the apostle, still more forcibly setting forth the divine superiority of Jesus Christ to angelic beings, "when on the morn of the resurrection he bringeth the first begotten into the world," (so styled, as being first raised from the dead) "he saith, let all the angels of God worship him?" Would Jehovah direct angels to commit the sin of idolatry, by offering worship to a created being? Must not he, whom angels are commanded to worship, be the Maker and the Lord of Angels-him, who only is worthy of worship, from everlasting to everlasting, "God?" In the account of the worship of heaven, given by that beloved apostle, who in spirit saw and heard the glory of the worship of the celestial hosts, the Son is honoured with the same worship with which the Father is worshipped - "Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb',"—unto the Son in our nature, a Lamb without blemish and without spot, slain for the sins of the world.

"And of the angels he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, or winds, his ministers a flame of fire." They are the instruments of his providence in the government of the world, servants of his, who speedy, and rapid, and powerful in

their movements as the wind, quick and energetic and effectual in their operations as a flame

of fire, fulfil his pleasure.

"But," so far from considering the Son, like the angels, as the dependant instrument of derivative power-(the Apostle thus conclusively proves the divinity of Christ)—" unto the Son he saith; Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The Son, King of kings and Lord of lords, as God; in his human nature, as Mediator, exercises dominion for ever and ever, possesses a kingdom that shall never be moved; "of the increase of his government there shall be no end";" "his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." "A sceptre of righteousness" is a sceptre of his kingdom—righteous in the laws, in the punishments, in the rewards of his kingdom, his administration is just and righteous. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." He is animated in his human nature, in consequence of its union with the Godhead, by an infinite love of righteousness, and detestation of iniquity. "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Jesus Christ, in his character as a divine Mediator, "the Word made flesh," possesses, as God, "a throne which is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness;" and, as man,

Isaiah ix. 7.

God, even his God who appointed him to the work of Mediator, and supported him in it, " hath anointed him with the oil of gladness;" hath advanced him, as Mediator, to a state of glory and triumph " above his fellows," above the most perfect of the human race, whose nature he had assumed, and whom, therefore, he called his brethren.

"And," still further establishing the divine superiority of the Son to all created beings, the Apostle applies to him a passage of the Psalms; in which he is addressed as Lord; and the creation and the dissolution of the world are assigned to him, while he remains unchangeable and eternal.

"Thou, Lord," (the address is made, brethren, to Jesus Christ) "in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth." The earth is founded stable and immovable by Jesus Christ.—"The heavens are the work of his hand." He has spread the immeasurable expanse of the firmament—by him the sun walks in majesty—by him the moon comes forth in brightness—by him the stars glitter in their courses—he has garnished the heavens. Mutable and transitory their glories—"they shall perish." "But, Son of the Father, thou remainest;" thou survivest the ruins of the work of thy hands, and remainest unchangeable in thy divine nature and power. "And they all shall wax old, as doth a garment.

E Psalm cii. 25.

and as a vesture shall he fold them up, and they shall be changed." With as much ease as a worn out vesture is folded up and laid aside, the Lord Christ shall fold up the material creations, and change into a new heavens and new earth the "things which now are." "But thou," Lord Jesus, "art the same," amidst all the mutations of nature; and when the revolutions of time cease, "thy years shall not fail." From everlacting to everlasting, thou art God.

1. My brethren, Can we hear these sublime addresses to that blessed Personage, by whom, in these last days, God speaks to us, and doubt whether we shall acknowledge and adore him as God? Can we behold him, represented as the heir, the possessor, the proprietor of all things; the Creator of the worlds; the effulgence of the Father's glory; the image, possessing and reflecting all the attributes of the Father's person; upholding all things by the word of his power; seated above the angels in that inheritance which he derived from God as his Son, and receiving their homage—can we thus behold him, and yet deny him to be God? What mortal arm shall wrest the Son from that throne which he possesses for ever and ever; and make a mutable, a perishing man, HIM who is held forth as remaining, when the heavens and the earth have passed away; the same amidst all the changes of the universe, his years never failing!

2. In the gift of this Divine Personage to be our Instructor and Saviour, let us discern and adore the infinite love of God the Father.

"God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." That infinite and eternal Being, whose incomprehensible nature none can by searching find out, is revealed in his holy word to our faith and adoration as subsisting in three co-equal and co-eternal persons-Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In this representation of the Divine nature, there is much that transcends our reason, but nothing that contradicts it; for reason cannot be a judge of the nature of that infinite and eternal Spirit who can be known only as he is revealed, and whose Divine essence can never be opened to the comprehension even of the most perfect intelligence that bows in adoration before his unsearchable glory.

But the agency of the persons of the Godhead in the work of our redemption, can be brought to the level of our comprehension; and it should be thoroughly understood by us so as to excite our love and adoration. The Father, revealed to our faith as the first in order of the three persons of the Godhead, of whom the Son is eternally begotten, and from whom and the Son, the Holy Ghost eternally proceeds, is not only thus the fountain of Divinity but the source

of that wonderful plan of redemption in which mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. It was "God-God the Father who spake unto us by his Son." It was "God-God the Father, who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son h." The purpose of mercy to redeem our fallen race, to extend pardon, and grace, and immortality to the subjects of sin and death, originated in God the Father; and he devised that mysterious scheme by which the eternal Son, expiating in our nature our sins and guilt, might bring us to glory. From the community indeed of counsels and of will among the persons of the Godhead, arising from the sameness of their essence, the Son, who was from all eternity "in the bosom of the Father'," and the eternal Spirit who " searcheth all things, even the deep things of God k," participated in the eternal purpose and counsel for the redemption of the world. But it eternally originated in the Father; who, from all eternity, the first in order of the persons of the Godhead, is the eternal fountain of all their powers and operations. Contemplating, then, the stupendous love displayed in our redemption from guilt and sin and misery, and our exaltation to pardon, to holiness, and to everlasting life, let us, in the language of the Church in her Com-

h John iii. 16. ^j John i. 18. k J Cor. ii. 10.

munion Service, "laud and magnify God the Father, because he did give Jesus Christ his only Son to be born, (as at this time) for us, who by the operation of the Holy Ghost was made man, without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin."

3. Let us also be impressed with a lively sense of our distinguished privileges in enjoying the revelation of God's will in his Son Jesus Christ.

He speaks unto us not in the imperfect messages, not in the dark savings, not in the typical actions and institutions of the Prophets; but in the clear and forcible language of a greater than Moses and the Prophets, his eternal Son; "the Word made flesh'," by whom "came grace and truth "." We are enlightened in the knowledge of God, by "the brightness of the Father's glory." The divine attributes are reflected to us in the "express image of the Father's person." What clearness, what fullness, what certainty must there be in this knowledge! What lustre, what majesty, what power in these attributes! And what gratitude and praise should we render to God, who hath thus caused to shine upon us his glory in the face of Jesus Christ-who gives to us the truths of salvation, the precepts of

¹ John i. 14.

holiness, the promises of mercy, the words of eternal life, not by the most perfect of his Prophets with whom he conversed face to face, but by his Son, who was in the bosom of the Godhead from all eternity, sharer of its glory and power, and partaker of its counsels and will.

Enjoying this superior measure of light and knowledge; surrounded by the glory that beams from the incarnate Son of God, what manner of persons ought we to be! What superior degrees of holiness ought we to exhibit! With what holy resolution ought we to shun "the works of darkness!' With what earnest desire and exertion to "put on the armour of light," the graces and virtues that shone forth in that Word, who was made flesh that he might be our example as well as our guide! With what constant vigilance and care ought we to abstain from all those lusts of the flesh, from which the Son of God came to redeem us! And with what unceasing and supreme ardour and effort should we seek to cultivate those "good works which he hath prepared for us to walk in!" "Of those to whom much is given, much will be required ""-Superior are our privileges—greater will be the requisitions from us, and more exalted will be our rewards, if we are faithful to the privileges we enjoy. But, oh-proportionably severe will be our punishment

ⁿ Luke xii, 48.

to redeem us, will come again the Lord of heaven and of earth, to judge us. "How shall we escape if we now refuse to hear him who speaketh to us from heaven"—the Son, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person, the Maker of the worlds, the Lord of all things! In him alone, God speaks to us. In him alone, the incarnate Word, are displayed the perfections and the will of God. Through the Son only can we know or have access to the Father.

Ungodly men, rejecting the Son of God, who has come in the flesh to redeem you—thoughtless votaries of the world, who neglect the salvation which he proclaims; he whom you reject, whose salvation you neglect, is that God, whose "throne is for ever and ever." "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre." And it is a sceptre of almighty power, as well as of inflexible justice.—Oh! provoke not then the wrath of this King of Zion—submit in penitence, in faith, in holy obedience to his sway. For of him, it is said—and the day is coming which before the myriads of angels and of men will verify the declaration—that he will "rule his adversaries as with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel "-For the Creator of the

[·] Psalm ii. 9.

world, the Upholder and the Lord of all things, he can and he will make all the powers of nature minister to his just vengeance in the perdition of the ungodly. "When his wrath is kindled, yea but a little—blessed are they that trust in him p."

4. Yes—faithful Christians—blessed are ye who trust in him. Having in the fulfilment of the eternal counsel of the Godhead, and in the execution of his own gracious purposes of love to you, "purged," expiated "your sins;" "he is now set down for ever at the right hand of God." There as your Mediator and Redeemer, in his glorified human nature, he is advanced to that almighty power and dominion, which in his divine nature as the Son of God he possessed from all eternity. Confide then in him and rejoice. Rejoice amidst all the temptations and sorrows that assail you. For he who commenced in the assumption of your nature the work of your redemption, now sits in majesty and glory at the right hand of the Father, to consummate by his power the work which he has begun. Your Saviour is the Creator of the worlds. He will make them all subservient to the salvation of his redeemed. Your Redeemer, Christians, is the Upholder and Lord of all things; he will rule them all for the good of his Church and people.

Exalted above all his enemies on a throne that endureth for ever and ever, he exercises the sceptre of his kingdom for the defence of those who submit to its righteous sway. If you, brethren, are of this number; if you are not only in name, but in deed and in truth the followers of the Lord Jesus; "what can hurt you or make you afraid." For "all things are yours," in that Redeemer with whom by an obedient faith you are united; and who exercises sway over all things, that he may make them "work together for your good '." When he rolls the heavens together and makes them depart as a scroll; when before the flames kindled by the breath of his displeasure, the earth is burned up, and passes away; he will still remain-your Redeemer, your Ruler, your Lord. And, sustained by his power, you shall remain, amidst the departing of the heavens, the passing away of the earth -you shall survive the dissolution of all things, and be with him for ever in his eternal and glorious kingdom, where with the Father and "the Holy Ghost he lives and reigns ever one God, world without end."

^{9 1} Cor. iii. 21.

r Rom. viii. 28.

SERMON XIV.

THE WORD.

[A CHRISTMAS SERMON.]

John i. 1-14.

- 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - 2. The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
 - 4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
- 6. There was a man sent from God whose name was John.
- 7. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.
- 8. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light.
- 9. That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

- 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
 - 11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.
- 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.
- 13. Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
- 14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

These words afford a luminous and forcible delineation of the character and offices of Jesus Christ. His pre-existence, his divinity, his incarnation, his glorious character and offices those truths which constitute the life of the Christian system, without which it would be only a comfortless code of morals; satisfying neither the doubts, nor allaying the fears of guilty man, shine forth in this passage with a lustre not to be darkened by prejudice, and not to be evaded by sophistry.

As then the Church, with admirable propriety, appoints this passage as the Gospel for this holy day, when she celebrates the joyful news of the birth of a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, it is proper you should understand its interesting import. And with this view, it shall be my object to explain and enforce its various parts.

The whole passage may be thus analyzed:— The person spoken of, who is Jesus Christ.

His pre-existence from all eternity.

The *title* bestowed on him, and the *declarations* concerning him, establishing his *divinity*.

The exercise of his divine power in the creation of the world.

The testimony to his incarnation.

His advent in the flesh.

His divine glory and his exalted offices.

His reception in the world.

The blessings which he bestows.

The consideration of these particulars, as set forth in this passage, must necessarily be brief, in the compass of a single discourse.

I. In this passage there is a person spoken of, and this person is Jesus Christ.

It certainly would not occur to any reader of this passage who had not a favourite theory to support, that by the term translated the Word, was denoted not a person, but merely an attribute of the Deity; his infinite wisdom, that perfection of reason which distinguishes the Supreme and Eternal Cause of all things. And yet this opinion has been advanced by some of the opposers of Christ's Divinity. They generally, however, admit that by the Word, in the original, the Logos, is meant not an attribute of the Deity, but a dis-

tinct person; and that this person is Jesus Christ. This construction is indeed the dictate of common sense. For the Word is represented as existing, as possessing attributes, as performing operations. The Word "was;" the "Word was God;" the Word "was life;" by the Word "all things were made;" the Word "came" into the world "to his own;" "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." These modes of expression, prove that the Word was a person. And if a person, none deny that by the Word is meant Jesus Christ, of whom John came to bear witness, and whom the apostle obviously applies in this chapter, all that he has said of the Word.

The Word then being a person, and this person Jesus Christ, we deduce from this passage.

II. The pre-existence of Christ from all eternity.

For the apostle says—"In the beginning was the Word,"—"the Word was in the beginning with God." Whatever had existence, before any thing was created, must necessarily be uncreated, and therefore must exist from eternity. The phrase, "in the beginning," is obviously used in the same meaning as in the first chapter of Genesis, where God is said, "in the beginning to have created the heavens and the earth." Jesus Christ, as "the Word," was then with God, when the heavens and the earth were cre-

ated; when all things were to be made, and of course, when there was no created existence. He was then, (as an inspired apostle elsewhere affirms) "before all things a," and must therefore have been uncreated; and necessarily existing from eternity.

The phrase, "in the beginning," sometimes denotes the commencement of the ministry of Christ; as, where it is said, "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not." But how unnatural and forced the Socinian construction, which considers the expression, "in the beginning the Word was," as denoting, "in the commencement of his ministry, or of the Gospel dispensation, Jesus Christ was." Does not the apostle, throughout the whole passage, speak of a time previously to the commencement of his ministry, when "all things were made by him," "when the world was made by him," "when he came into the world?"

The meaning which common sense would affix to this expression, is the same which it has when the inspired historian says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Then, before any thing was created, "the Word," Jesus Christ, "was." He was therefore uncreated and from all eternity. The passage sets forth

III. The title bestowed on Jesus Christ, and

¹ Col. i. 17. ¹ John vi. 64.

the declarations concerning him, establishing his divinity.

The title bestowed on Jesus Christ is that of the Word—" In the beginning was the Word." And this title sets forth both his nature and his office.

"The Word" is evidently applied to Jesus Christ, and affirms of him whatever is implied in this title. It must be evident that the apostle, who was a Jew, writing for the information of his countrymen, when he used a term known to them, would employ it in the sense in which they understood it. Now it is a fact not admitting of dispute, and which has been established by reference to ancient Jewish commentators, that the title "the Word," was used by them to denote a divine person. They affirm of this Word of the Lord, the titles, attributes, and acts which they attribute to Jehovah; and consider him as the Messiah. The ancient Jews regarded the Messiah as a divine person, and denoted him by the appellation, "the Word." The evangelist St. John, therefore, employing the same title, must have used it in the same sense in which it was understood by the Jews: and therefore applying this term to Christ, he designed to establish his divinity.

We see then the fallacy of the assertion made by the opponents of Christ's Divinity, that the evangelist borrowed this appellation, "the Word," from heathen writers. The Platonic school of philosophy, indeed, held a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, and styled the second person the Logos, or Word. But so far from the evangelist having derived this appellation from the Platonic writers, it must be traced from them to that more ancient school, where both they and the evangelists derived its application—the school of the Jewish commentators; many of whom flourished before the age of the Platonic philosophy. The mystery of the Trinity, and the divine Logos, or Word, did not arise from the mystical reveries of Platonism. It was the faith of the Old Testament, of the ancient Jewish Church; and the evangelist St. John, in applying to the Messias the term Logos, or Word, used a term well known by his countrymen, to denote a divine person, and that person the Messias.

And this term was aptly applied to Christ, inasmuch as it set forth his office. For as the term Logos, or Word, denotes reason, wisdom, or knowledge, and the expression of that knowledge to others by words; so in Christ dwelt the fulness of divine knowledge; and it was his office to proclaim this knowledge to a benighted world.

Not only the title, but the declarations applied to Jesus Christ, in this passage, establish his Divinity.

" And the Word was with God,"-explained

by the parallel phrase in the eighteenth verse of this chapter, as being "in the bosom of the Father;" in a state of the most intimate union with him. What a feeble and forced meaning do the opposers of Christ's divinity put upon this expression. They consider it as denoting that Christ retired to private communion with God, before his entrance on his ministry! What a strong expression—" the Word was with God,"— to set forth a circumstance comparatively so unimportant!

Further-" The Word was God." This, one would think, determined, beyond cavil, the divinity of the Word. But no: because in the book of Exodus it is said, that Moses was "made a God to Pharaoh'," that is, was appointed as God's delegate, or ambassador, to denounce his judgments, and to proclaim his commands; so, when it is said "the Word was God," it simply means, according to the opposers of Christ's divinity, that the Word was a God—in an inferior sense, as vested with a divine commission. But the expression "God" in this verse, means God absolutely. The same term occurs in other verses in this same chapter. In the sixth verse--"there was a man sent from God:"-in the twelfth verse-" to them gave he power to become the Sons of God:"-in the thirteenth,-

[·] Exodus vii. 1.

which "were born, not of the will of man, but of God." In all these cases, the term God is used absolutely. To consider it as meaning a God, in an inferior capacity, would destroy the sense. The title in the expression, "the Word was God," must have the same signification, must denote God absolutely.

The title ascribed to Christ, and the declarations concerning him, establish his Divinity. It is further confirmed by the exhibition in this passage of his Divine power in the creation of the world; and this was noted as the fourth particular.

IV. The exercise of the Divine power of Christ as the *Word*, in the *creation of the world*.

In the third verse, "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." And again in the tenth verse, "the world was made by him." What strong expressions these!—how varied and reiterated! as if to remove all doubts of the Divine power of Christ as the Creator of the world. And they accord with other passages of Scripture, and particularly with that in the Epistle for the day, where it is said, that by Christ "God made the worlds "" not a delegated agent; for the power

of creation, involving the attribute of Omnipotence, cannot be delegated; but by Christ in his capacity as one of the persons of the Godhead.

Brethren—what think you is the interpretation by which the opposers of Christ's divinity strip him of his office of Creator of the worlds? "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made," they interpret—"All things in the Christian dispensation were done by Christ, and nothing has been done without his warrant." To state this unnatural and forced interpretation is to refute it. It rests entirely on the erroneous assumption, that the word translated "made," never is used in the sense of creation. Whereas the word is used in this acceptation by the best heathen writers; and the apostle James thus uses it, where he says --"Men that are mude after the similitude of God "." And the declaration, "the world was made by him," can refer only to his creation of it.

The Socimian interpretation of the declaration, "the world was made by him," is that "the world was enlightened by him." This is entirely conjectural and gratuitous; and contrary to the obvious meaning of the passage.

This divine Word, the Creator of the world, assuming the office of its Redeemer, his advent,

as might reasonably be supposed, from the exalted excellence of his nature, and the interesting object of his coming, was announced by an inspired messenger.

V. The testimony to his incarnation was the fifth particular noted in this passage.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Though he came with a prophetic power and spirit, like that which distinguished Elias, one of the first of the Prophets, yet he was only the precursor of the advent of a greater than he, to whom he was to bear witness that all through him might believe; and for whose enlightening and holy instructions he was to prepare, by the preaching of repentance, a corrupt and guilty world.

VI. The *incarnation* of "the Word," is another of those sublime truths set forth in this passage.

It is necessarily implied indeed in those parts of the passage which represent that "Divine person," one of the persons of the Godhead, whom, in the ancient language of both Jews and Gentiles, was styled "the Word," as "being in the world," as "coming unto his own"—which, divine and spiritual as was this person of the Godhead, could not be done, but by his assump-

tion of the nature of man. His incarnation, however, is expressly held forth in the expression, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

"The Word was made flesh"-incomprehensibly united to our whole nature, soul as well as body; "flesh," signifying by a figure which puts a part for the whole, our entire nature. Truly God, and not according to the Arian doctrine, God only in an inferior and subordinate sense, he became perfectly, and not according to the Apollinarian heresy, only in appearance man. And man as well as God in intimate union; and not divided as the Nestorians maintained. And yet though both God and man in one person, the natures though united, were yet not confounded; which was the Eutychian heresy. These were the heresies which, in the centuries immediately following the third century, assailed the truth which the apostle declares concerning the incarnation of the Word; and against which the first four general councils of the Christian Church, with singular unanimity, maintained that doctrine which had been handed down from apostles and fathers; and which is embodied in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and drawn out with great precision in the latter.

In opposition to the interpretation of the passage, "the Word was made flesh," as denoting the incarnation of the Word, the impugners of Christ's Divinity, use for the term translated

"was made," the simple affirmation "was." The Word was flesh. But if, according to these views, the Word was not a divine person, but only a man, what unmeaning tautology in this expression; it would affirm the truism—the man was a man. But if, on the contrary, as has been proved, the Word was a divine person, even their own translation of the passage, the Word was a man, means that who was God was also man. And 1... could not be, unless he became man, or was made man. With this interpretation of the expression, accords also the subsequent declaration "he dwelt, or tabernacled among us;" which, alluding to the residence of the divine glory in the Jewish tabernacle, evidently implies, that as the glory of God was in the Jewish tabernacle, the glory of the Word animated the person of Jesus Christ

That the Word should be made flesh; that the divine nature should be united to the human; that, in one person Christ, as our Articles declare, "two whole and perfect natures, the Godhead and manhood were joined together, never to be divided, so that he is very God and very man," is indeed a wonderful mystery; transcending and confounding the faculties of the human mind! But until we can find out, can comprehend God; and until we can find out, can comprehend every thing that relates to our own nature, every thing that relates to the various animal existences and

material objects on which our knowlege is exercised, let us not presumptuously, unreasonably, and absurdly expect to comprehend the things that relate to the divine nature and incarnation of the Eternal Word. Let us not criminally reject, because transcending our reason, truths, the most exalted and beneficial, and involving our eternal salvation. For, my brethren, contemplate as unfolded in this passage,

VII. The divine glory and power, and the exalted offices of Christ in his state of incarnation.

Behold his glory—not merely (as is contended by those who strip him of the "glory which he had with the Father before the world was") manifested in his divine acts, in his rising from the grave, in his dispensing the gifts of the Spirit; but the glory shining forth in him, in whom dwelt "the fullness of the Godhead'," who was God manifest in the flesh,—his glory, who was the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the image of the Father's person^g,"—"the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father;" deriving the divine nature and glory in an incomprehensible manner from the Father. Behold him "dwelling among us;" constantly manifesting himself "full of grace and truth," ever speaking

the words of kindness, and teaching us eternal truth; dispensing to us that pardon, that grace and favour which the law, which came by Moses, as a dispensation of justice, could not give; and assuring to us the "truth" of those spiritual blessings of which the law held forth only the shadow. For "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ "—grace releasing us from condemnation; truth delivering us from error.

"In him," indeed, "was life"—life eternal, which he brought to light, and which, purchased by his death, he will dispense to all that believe on him. And "this life was the light of men." He only having the words of eternal life, can be the "light" that guides men to it; shining as it did in the midst of the darkness of Jewish prejudice and Heathen error. He indeed was that true light, which, as he says of himself, "coming into the world enlighteneth every man;" for he is the source of all spiritual wisdom and knowledge; alone pointing out the way of access unto the Father, and bringing life and immortality to light.

But, as a further particular set forth in this passage,

VIII. What was the reception in the world, of

h John i. 17.

the "Word made flesh," the life and light of men.

Alas—"he shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not"-" He was in the world, but the world knew him not." "He came unto his own, his own received him not." Darkened by prejudice, enslaved by their vices, devoted to the objects of sense, the world knew not the eternal Word made flesh dwelling among them. They would not understand the holy truths which he taught. They would not heed the words of salvation spoken by him, the teacher from God himself, the Eternal Wisdom, who "spake as never man spake"." Even "his own" -his own people, the nation of whom according to the flesh he came; of whom promised from the beginning their prophets had sung; and whose spiritual offices their law had typified-"his own," they who had been selected to preserve the knowledge of his promised salvation; and to whom first the glad tidings of "a salvation which was for all people," should be proclaimed -received him not. He sought to arouse them by reproaches; to alarm them by denunciations; to soften them by entreaties; to subdue them by tears. "They received him not." He

i John vii. 46.

came to be their *spiritual* deliverer; and their pride, anticipating the splendour of the temporal conqueror, rejected "this man of sorrows." He came, preaching the words of truth and purity; and devoted to their vices, they scorned the yoke of this Holy one of God. Infatuated people—they received him not—and tremendous imprecation—tremendously executed—his "blood has been upon them and upon their children!"

IX. But lastly—and to close the illustration of the particulars contained in this interesting passage—there were some who received him; and exalted were the *blessings* which he bestowed upon them.

These were those who waited for salvation in Israel; the salvation which their Prophets and Kings had desired to see, but had not seen it; and they hailed Jesus of Nazareth, as their Messiah, promised long, the glory of his people, coming to redeem them, not from temporal but from spiritual bondage; to visit them, not with a temporal, but with an everlasting salvation. These were those among the Gentiles, who by the wisdom of the world, in vain seeking fully to know that Being whom they ignorantly worshipped; and vainly endeavouring by "thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil," to

wash away sin received. Jesus of Nazareth as "a teacher sent from God k," and as that "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world!." And receiving him by a true and living faith, to them "he gave power to become the sons of God;" entitled to all the blessings of this spiritual adoption, the favour of God, and the bliss of an heavenly inheritance. And this spiritual birth, was "not of blood," not in consequence of their natural ancestry; "or not of the will of the flesh," of any human agency; but "of God," through whose grace and mercy alone they were begotten to the new and lively hopes of being the children of God, and heirs of immortal glory.

Brethren—in the explanation of those parts of this interesting passage, which relate to the nature of him, whose nativity we this day celebrate, as glad tidings of great joy, it has been my object to rescue it from the false constructions of the opposers of his divinity, and to exhibit it to you, in its natural, perspicuous, and forcible meaning, as sanctioned by the general reception of the Christian world.

If he who "was with God," who "was God," the Creator of all things, without whom was not any thing made that was made," the Etcinal

k John iii. 2.

John i. 29.

Word; be "made flesh," and comes to us with the messages of salvation; how great must be our guilt, how tremendous our punishment, if we receive him not! He comes to us in those sacred oracles, which display him in the divine glory of his character, in the purity of his life, in the fulness of his grace and mercy; and which reveal all that is necessary for us to know as truths to believe or as precepts to practise. He comes to us in the ministrations and ordinances of his Church; "the body" which he established; and to which, as its head, he communicates his mercy and his grace; and through which are conveyed and assured to the penitent and believing the exalted blessings of pardon and adoption and eternal life. He comes to us, this day, in the holy services of his Church, and in that sacrament which shews him forth. He comes, the babe of Bethlehem; but yet he, whose "goings forth have been from everlasting " "-Born of a virgin; but yet "God with us" "-The child of pain and sorrow; but yet "the only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father" -- Made flesh indeed; but yet the "Eternal Word," the "brightness of the Father's glory." Within the glory that surrounds him, mortal eye cannot penetrate; and his incarnation, the union of the

m Micah v. 2.

ⁿ Isaiah vii. 14.

º John i. 18.

Eternal Word with a mortal body, must remain like that Being whose essence no man hath seen or can see, past finding out. But still we behold the manifestations of his glory in the grace and truth which he dispenses, in the pardon and salvation which he offers us. He comes unto us. And shall it be said that we receive him not; that we regard not his infinite condescension, his surpassing love, his everlasting salvation; and that though he comes to save us from our sins, from those sins we will not be saved? Ah!—brethren—in those sins then we shall perish; under the aggravated condemnation of rejecting "the Word," the Son of God "made flesh and dwelling among us!"

He comes to us this day as "the Saviour, who is Christ the Lord," to visit us with an everlasting salvation, to redeem us from the bondage of sin and death. With hearts impressed with a lively sense of his infinite grace and mercy, let us in penitence and holy faith receive him, and he will give us power to become the Sons of God. Our adoption will be the spiritual adoption of the children of God, whose mercy will here be our solace, whose grace will here be our defence, and whose favour will be our portion in that everlasting state, where "the Word made flesh" shall be displayed; not the man of sorrows, but the King of glory—not surrounded by the suffer-

ings of mortality, but shining forth with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. And we shall be like him, in his purity and in his felicity. For it will be our everlasting privilege to see and to adore him.

SERMON XV.

CHRIST IN THE FORM OF GOD.

[SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE EASTER.]

PHILIPPIANS ii. 5-11.

- 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
- 6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
- 7. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
- 8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
- 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
- 10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth:
- 11. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This impressive and interesting passage, which occurs in the epistle for the day, exhibits most fully and distinctly the various states or conditions in which Jesus Christ existed and still exists. In this view, as unfolding to us the nature and character of that Saviour in whom we

are called to believe, and with whom we confide the salvation of our souls, our spiritual interests here, and all our hopes for eternity, a right understanding of this passage must be, to each one of us, a matter of the highest moment.

The following fundamental truths may be deduced from it. That Jesus Christ existed as God, in an equality with God, before he assumed the nature of man—that in this human nature he humbled himself to suffering and death—and that for this humiliation, God the Father hath exalted him as man to a state of glory, and invested him with dominion over all things, and commanded adoration and obedience to be rendered to him as Mediator, to the glory of God the Father. These are the truths which appear on the face of these declarations of the Apostle.

Let us see, my brethren, whether they will stand the test of inquiry and investigation.

- I. The *pre-existence* of Christ—that is—his existence before he came into the world.
- II. His pre-existence, not as a creature—but as God, in a state of equality with God.
- III. His humiliation, in his assumption of the nature of man; being made flesh—and in the course of suffering and in the ignominious death to which he submitted—and

IV. Lastly—his exaltation in his nature as man, and in his office as Mediator, to supreme authority and dominion—so that divine adoration is to be paid to him, to the glory of God the Father.

These are the truths which I propose now to shew are set forth in this passage of the Apostle.

I. The *pre-existence* of Jesus Christ—that is, his existence before he came into the world, is set forth in this passage.

The Apostle speaks of a particular time when Jesus Christ "made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man." It is too plain, then, to admit of a moment's doubt that he must have existed before the period when he assumed the human nature. But if he existed before he was made man, it is equally plain that in his state of pre-existence he could not have been man. And if he was not man in his pre-existent condition, he must have been of a superior order of created beings; or the Apostle's argument, from the condescension of Christ in making himself of no reputation by the assumption of our degraded nature, would entirely lose its force. Thus, then, this passage clearly and entirely demolishes the Socinian heresy, that Christ never existed before he came into the world as man.

And it subverts, also, the *Arian* heresy, that though Christ existed before he came into the world, he was only the *first of created beings*. For the passage unequivocally declares

II. The pre-existence of Christ, not as a creature, but as God—in a state of equality with God.

His pre-existent nature is thus denoted— "being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

The Socinian hypothesis maintains, that the phrase, "being in the form of God," merely denotes Christ's being invested with the divine power of working miracles. The construction is evidently far-fetched and forced. Besides, the Apostle is speaking of the condition of Christ before he was made man; and the power of working miracles appertains to the condition of Christ as a man; and it would be absurd, therefore, to affirm of Christ, before he was made man, that he had the power of working miracles. If this interpretation had not been repeatedly advanced and gravely defended by some who oppose our Lord's Divinity, the credibility of its ever entering into the mind, might reasonably be denied.

But without entering into any minute critical investigation, not so suitable in this place, of the meaning of the original word, translated "form," it must be evident that, in the same sense in which Christ is said to be "in the form of a servant," "or the likeness of men," and "in the fashion of a man." he must be "in the form of God." The Apostle affirms of Christ, that "being in the form of God, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." All persons, even the impugners of Christ's Divinity, admit that by his taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, is meant that Christ was actually a man. If then, being in the form of a servant, in the likeness of men, in fashion as a man, denote Christ's possession of the human nature; his "being in the form of God," must denote his possession of the Divine nature. If his being in the form of God, does not prove that he was God; his being in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men, and in fashion as a man, does not prove that he was man.

But admitting, according to another Socinian hypothesis, that the phrase, "the form of God," does not mean the nature, but only the condition of God; still let it be asked—How can Christ be in the condition of God, and not be God? Is it possible to be in the condition of man, and not

be man? A created being cannot be in the condition of God. The phrase cannot be applied but to one who possesses the Divine nature.

And admit still farther, according to a third Socinian hypothesis, that the expression, "form of God," denotes the display of the Divine attributes by Jesus Christ, or the visible manifestation of the Divine glory in him, such as was afforded to the patriarchs and prophets, to whom God appeared in the Schekinah or visible splendour. Again let it be asked—Can any created being display the Divine attributes—and thus possess, or he could not display them, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and all the infinite perfections of holiness and goodness? Or, would that Divine Being, who declares that he is so jealous of his glory, that he giveth it not to another, invest any created being with that lustre which made Moses exclaim-" I exceedingly fear and quake ";" and which cast down before its ineffable effulgence the holy prophet and made him say-" Woe is me, for I am an unclean man b."

There can be no meaning affixed to the phrase "being in the form of God," which does not necessarily attribute to Christ the Divine nature.

This interpretation is justified by the words which follow, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

³ Heb. xii. 21.

b Isaiah vi. 5.

The obvious meaning of these words, which in our translation are literally rendered, is, that Christ being really God, did not think it a violent assumption of what did not belong to him, "a robbery," to claim an equality with God! Nor is this an irrelevant tautology. Since, the design of the Apostle being to prove Christ's humility in his taking our nature by the infinite superiority of his former condition, there is great propriety and force in his exhibiting this superiority in more than one expression.

If, with some, we after the translation of the passage, and instead of considering the word translated "robbery," as the act of taking what does not belong to us, interpret it as the thing thus violently coveted; Christ is then represented as not so eagerly coveting an equality with God, as to prevent his taking upon him the form of a servant and the likeness of men. On the orthodox opinion, that Christ is really equal with God the Father as to his nature, the interpretation of the passage then would be-that Christ, though equal with the Father in the possession of the same Divine nature, did not retain with such vehement ardour, did not so eagerly covet, the glory and honours to which his divinity entitled him, as to prevent him from taking upon him the degraded condition of humanity. And this interpretation does not militate with the object of the Apostle which was

to illustrate the infinite condescension of Christ in his humiliation.

But on the Socinian hypothesis that Christ is only a man, how absurd the assertion that he did not covet to be equal with God! As if his not impiously aspiring after divine honours, which, as a man, would be the evidence of the most daring pride, could be an illustration of great humility. And how entirely the beauty and force of the Apostle's reasoning are lost, when, according to the Socinian interpretation, that by being in the form of God, and equal with God, is most strangely and absurdly meant, the power of working miracles, Christ is represented merely, as not eagerly coveting, nor ostentatiously displaying the exercise of his miraculous gifts!

On the contrary; with what force and interest does the Apostle, according to the orthodox construction of his declarations, contrast the pre-existent dignity of Christ, when being in the form of God, he did not think that he took what did not belong to him when he claimed an equality with God,—with that state of humiliation into which he descended when he took upon him the "form of a servant," and was "made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man, and humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" How does it illustrate and establish the profound humility, and the infinite condescension of Jesus

Christ, in thus making himself of no reputation, when we consider him as possessed of divine attributes and receiving divine honours, being so in the form of God as to be equal with God!

III. It is this humiliation of Christ, in his assumption of the nature of man, and in the course of suffering, and in the ignominious death to which he submitted—which the Apostle sets forth in the subsequent verses—" He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men—and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

These words, which are plainly put in contrast with the preceding, prove that the construction given to these latter, by which the divinity of Christ is established, is correct. For surely the expressions, "making himself of no reputation, and taking upon himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man," denote, with the utmost force of language, the incarnation of Christ, and his subjection to suffering and death. The contrast is then only complete, when we refer the former to the Divine nature and dignity of Christ.

"He made himself of no reputation"-or as the original word may be rendered—he empticá himself .-- He gave up the enjoyment of his divine glories and honours which he had with the Father before the world was. And the mode in which this abasement was effected, the next words state-" and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." In an incomprehensible manner, his Divine nature was united to the nature of man; and thus his Divine attributes and glory were veiled in a human form. Unchangeable indeed was the divinity of Christ. It was not, it could not be confounded with the mortal form, which it mysteriously pervaded. In his person the two natures, divine and human, were incomprehensibly united. "Equal to the Father," as touching his unchangeable "Godhead," he was "inferior as touching his manhood "." Nor was it merely the nature of man which he assumed. He placed himself in the most suffering condition of humanity; taking upon him "the form of a servant "-choosing the most obscure and abject condition; entering into the world in a manger; growing up as "a root out of a dry ground "," never refreshed by the genial comforts of refined and polished life; wandering without "a place to

c Athanasian Creed.

d Isaiah liii. 2.

lay his head ";" making his abode with publicans and sinners; and so low and humble in his lot. that men saw "no beauty that they should desire him "-" He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'."

Yet still further was his humiliation extended. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Observe, my brethren, the force of the expression, "being found in fashion as a man." If Christ were no more than man, would not the natural and correct phrase have been, "being man." But being found in fashion as a man, having all the circumstances of man, he was in reality more than man. All the appendages of humanity with which he was invested, only concealed the divine glories which animated his human nature. And thus being found by his implacable persecutors as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. But if Christ were no more than man, where was the extraordinary humility in his obedience unto death? What condescension does it discover in submitting to a calamity which we cannot avoid? Who would say that a man discovered extraordinary humility in submitting to the sentence pronounced on every man, "Thou shalt surely die?" But when

e Matt. viii. 20. f Isaiah liii. 3.

the Lord of life and of death became obedient unto death; when the Creator, clothed with mortality, paid the forfeit incurred by the creature; and when that death, too, was the death of the cross; then, was humility displayed transcending our conceptions; and then inexpressible force is given to the Apostle's illustration of the humility and condescension of Jesus Christ!

But his humiliation was not without a reward. For the Apostle proceeds so set forth,

IV. Lastly, the evaltation of Christ in his nature as man, and in his character as Mediator, to supreme authority and dominion—so that divine honours are rendered to him, to the glory of God the Father. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

From the beginning, or ever the world was, Christ "was God, was with God"," possessing divine honours and glories, and receiving the worship of the Heavenly host. And as God, Christ, when he took upon him human nature, possessed divine attributes and received divine

honours. It was therefore in his nature as man, and in his office as Mediator, that God highly exalted him. Christ is now, in his glorified human nature, exalted to supreme authority and dominion—head over all things to his Church— Lord of angels and of men. For God has given him "a name that is above every name," the name Jesus, which imports, "divine Saviour"and which is therefore superior to all names that can be bestowed on created beings. And "at this name "-to him who enjoys it, "every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth." All the host of heaven, all the inhabitants of the earth, all the spirits of the departed, should render divine honours, to Christ the Son in his office as Mediator, "honouring him even as they honour the Father"." "And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord "-the Supreme Ruler of the world, as the Apostle John emphatically styles him, "King of kings and Lord of lords"-pos sessing in his own divine right universal and sovereign dominion, and exercising in his nature as man, and in his office as Mediator, "all power in heaven and in earth;" as the King of glory, his "dominion an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed "." And this divine adoration of Christ is "to the

^h John v. 23. Rev. xix. 16. Daniel vii. 14.

glory of God the Father'—who sent him, his only-begotten Son, to take upon him our nature, and who advanced him, in that nature, as our Head and Saviour, to everlasting power and dominion.

My brethren—the angels in heaven, and the Church of the first-born, are represented by the Apostle as bowing the knee to Jesus Christ, and confessing that he is Lord. Oh! let us fear, that, if through that pride of human reason which rashly and presumptuously attempts to search and to comprehend the Divine nature, we refuse to unite in those songs of the Church on earth which ascribe divine honours to him who, for our sakes, "humbled himself and became obedient unto death,"—we shall not be prepared for uniting in the songs of the Church triumphant. For no praises are there heard, but those of "blessing and honour and glory and power to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever"—" Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing 1."

My brethren—For us, the Son of God humbled himself; the High and Holy one, who filleth eternity, tabernacled on earth; the brightness of the Father's glory was veiled in mortal form. For us—the Lord of Life offered himself

in the death of the cross. It is a display of humility and love which baffles comprehension, but which should excite our unutterable wonder and adoration.

What return shall we make, for all this goodness, to him who, "though he was rich"-rich in the glory of the Godhead---" for our sakes became poor;" and though the Lord of angels and of men-for our sakes submitted to the death of the cross? The Apostle answers-" Let the same mind be in you which was in him,"-the same spirit of humility, of gentleness, and of divine love. And let his infinite condescension in taking upon him our nature, and the sufferings by which he achieved our redemption, call forth our devout gratitude. Let those sufferings be commemorated with sacred sympathy and devotion in the services of the Church during this holy week. Let not the day which is sacred to the commemoration of his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, be profaned by the business or the pleasures of the world; but let us, in public and in private, meditate upon and commemorate the sorrows and the death of him who, for our sakes, was acquainted with grief, and for us made his soul an offering. And especially let us celebrate the exceeding great love of him who for us died and for us

rose again, in that Holy Supper which he instituted. My brethren, who was it that said-"This do in remembrance of me?"—He, who being in the form of God, and equal with God, for us made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; and is now exalted as the King of kings and Lord of lords-He, who will come to sit in judgment upon us, and to dispense the felicities or the woe of eternity. Can we at his tribunal, before an assembled unirerse-for at his tribunal, before an assembled unirerse we must render an account—justify or excuse our disobedience to the dying injunction of the Lord who bought us-" Do this in remembrance of me!" Oh-let us realise the hour, the tribunal, the account of the last judgment; the power, the majesty, the justice of the Eternal Judge; and let us in humility, in penitence, in faith and in love, surrender ourselves a living sacrifice to him, who for us humbled himself and became obedient unto death; and let us seal the devotion by the symbols of his body and his blood. Often invited, often arged, and often warned-oh! that so many should wilfully "abstain from the table of their Divine Lord, and separate from their brethren who come to feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food."

Lord and Master-the table of thy love is ready-and yet they who are bidden do not come. My brethren-remember the denunciation -"They shall not taste of my Supper." Blessed Jesus! -- excluded from thy heavenly feast, whither shall they go!

SERMON XVI.

BY CHRIST ALL THINGS CREATED. [SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.]

Col. i. 15-17.

15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

17. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

It does not admit of a moment's doubt, that this is a description of Jesus Christ. For, in the verses preceding, the Apostle calls on the Colossians to give thanks unto the Father for "translating them into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Then follows my text.

In this passage, which occurs in one of the lessons for the day, there are expressions which

power which would lead the unprejudiced mind to attribute to Christ uncreated divinity; and others which seem to depress him to the grade of a creature. He, who is the "image of the invisible God," we should think must possess the attributes of that God, of whom he is the image. He, who "created all things," who " is before all things," and " by whom all things consist," it would seem impious to consider, as less than God. While the appellation "the first born of every creature," would, at the first view, seem to establish an inferiority of nature incompatible with his Divinity.

My brethren, whatever God has revealed of his infinite nature, it is surely of importance that we should believe. And if faith in Jesus Christ be the prescribed condition of salvation, it is of indispensible importance to ascertain the nature and character of him in whom we are called to profess our faith. Let us then turn our attention to the investigation of the meaning of a passage which exhibits him to us in so many striking expressions.

The first expression by which he is represented is, "the image of the invisible God."

In the ordinary acceptation of words, when is one person said to be the image of another?

When the former resembles the latter in corporeal or intellectual qualities. In what sense then can it be said that Christ is "the image of the invisible God?" Without doubt, as resembling God in the spiritual properties of the Divine nature. And, let it be observed, the resemblance is not partial, in the possession merely of certain communicable attributes of wisdom and righteousness, in which sense man is said to have been made "in the image of God a;" but is full and perfect—embracing the incommunicable properties of the Divine essence—so that the same Apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, styles Christ—" the brightness and the express," the exact, "image of his person b." But how can Christ be the exact image of the Father's person, and thus possess all the attributes and properties of the Divine essence, without being God? It is not sufficient, therefore, to say that Christ is the image of God, merely because he discloses to us the Divine perfections and will, in which sense this appellation is bestowed upon him by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Corinthians c. He cannot be the image of the invisible God, the express, exact image of the Father's person, unless he possesses all the properties and attributes of the Divine nature

In this sense, of a sameness of nature and

² Gen. i. 27. b Heb. i. 3. c 2 Cor. iv. 4.

properties, as denoting the substance and not merely the shadow, is the word image used by the Apostle, when he says, "As we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"." And, in the Hebrews, "The law containing a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things"." Image, then, in apostolical language, denotes the possession on the part of the person or thing, to whom it is applied of all the properties and of the nature of the person or thing with whom or with which the comparison is drawn. Christ, therefore, "who is the image of the invisible God," must possess the Divine nature.

But how does this possession of the Divine nature comport with the next title bestowed of Christ in the passage under consideration?

The title applied to Christ, "first-born," simply considered, might lead to the supposition, that he was the first of created beings. But when we connect these terms with the succeeding—"the first-born of every creature," the phrase means, born before all creatures; or, as the Apostle declares in a subsequent part of this same passage—"he is before all things." But could he be born before all creatures, could he be "before all things," and be himself a creature—a part of that creation before the whole of which

it is said, he existed? Impossible. And if he be not a creature, whom can he be but the uncreated Being, who, existing before all things, existed necessarily from all eternity? Begotten indeed the Son was; deriving his nature, in an incomprehensible manner, from the Father; and therefore styled, "own Son" and "the only-begotten Son of God"." But he thus ineffably derived his divine nature, was thus begotten, "before all things," "from the beginning, or ever the world was."

And that he was thus God, begotten before the whole creation, is confirmed by the subsequent declaration of the Apostle, in sublime terms exhibiting him as the Creator of the worlds.

"For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

"By him were all things created"—and therefore he must be "before all things," himself uncreated. "By him"—not as the instrumental
but as the efficient cause, in the same sense, in

¹ Rom. viii. 3. John i. 14. 18.

which it is said in the epistle to the Romans's, "all things are by God." were "att things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth." He it was, the only-begotten Bon of God, who came forth in the plenitude of wisdom and of power, and was the Almighty Agent in that creation of which Moses writes:—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

And the Apostle continues—" visible and invisible"—the earth, with all that we there behold, the innumerable creatures for whom it is assigned as the habitation—the heavens, with the countless orbs that sparkle in the firmament, with the unnumbered worlds that in boundless space lie beyond the reach of human vision, and with the innumerable orders of intellectual beings that inhabit those unnumbered worlds, "whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers." The same expressions, denoting the various orders of good angels, occur in the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where Christ, in his human nature, is said to be exalted after his resurrection "far above all principality and power and might and dominion b." And in the sixth Chapter of the same Epistle, some of these titles are applied to the evil angels, against whose temptations man is to contend-" For we wrestle not against flesh and

blood, but against principalities and powers'." And again, some of the same terms denote, in the twelith Chapter of Luke, the human "magistrates and powers," before whom the disciples of our Lord were to be brought k.

These expressions then, in their application in the passage to the Ephesians, denote the exaltation of Christ, after his resurrection, in his glorified human nature, to dominion over all created nature, above all the orders of intelligent beings that inhabit the universe of God. But in the passage to the Colossians which is under consideration, all these orders of intellectual beings, angels good and bad, in their various grades of excellence and of station, and man in his highest state of authority and power, are said to have been created by him-" For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers." It would be absurd and impious to ascribe to him, in his human nature, this work of creating all the various orders of angelic and human beings. He who creates all intelligent beings, must have existed before the intelligent beings whom he created. Jesus Christ is here said to have created all the various orders of spiritual agents, from the highest Cherubim

^{&#}x27; Eph. vi. 12.

k Luke xii. 11.

and the humblest seraph, to man, but little lower than the angels. The conclusion then is plain-Jesus Christ must have existed before any of the intelligent creatures in the universe of God. He who exists before all created beings, must be uncreated—Christ thus existed before all intelligent beings—he must therefore be uncreated. And who can be uncreated, but the first, supreme Cause of all things, the infinite and eternal God!

The Apostle ceases not to dwell on the sublime theme of the exalted power and dignity of the Divine personage whom he is describing— "By him" (Jesus Christ) he had already said, "all things were created." But not satisfied with this general expression, certainly sufficient to establish the creation of all things as the work of Christ, he enumerates particulars, and thus removes every doubt as to the extent of the creative power of him who is styled the Son of God. "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers." Elevated by the consideration of the Divine power and authority of his Master, as if to silence every cavil of scepticism, he repeats,-" all things were created by him." By him, it may be said, as the delegated instrument of the Almighty Father. What, my brethren, can that omniscience and omnipotence, by which

only the work of creation was effected, be possessed or exercised by any but God? Or will he tranger his infinite and eternal attributes any more than his glory to another! The Scriptures unito and; assert his supreme divinity in opposition to the idols of Gentile worship, by assigning to him the work of creation. "The gods of the heathen are dumb idols, but it is the Lord who made the heavens'." But if the work of creation can be delegated, this argument for the supreme divinity of the Maker of heaven and earth fails-For he, Jehovah, might then be, as the heathen contended in opposition to the Jews, only one of those innumerable deities among whom divine attributes and powers were divided; exercising delegated, and of course subordinate power.

God, indeed, is said, in that sublime passage in the Hebrews, which describes the nature and offices of the incarnate Son—to have made the worlds "by him." But this only proves that the first person of the Godhead, styled the Father, in his distinctive character from the Son, is the source of all divine attributes and acts. Creative power emanates from him. He made the worlds. And he is the source of redeeming mercy—for "God so loved the world, as to send his onlybegotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." But he who is not merely

Psalm xcvi, 5.

"the begotten Son" of God, but the "onlybegotten," must be so, in that incommunicable sense in which he derives a divine nature from the Father. And therefore, God's redeeming the world by his Son, does not prove the inferiority of the nature of the Son. Nor, of course, is any inferiority of the Son to be inferred, from God's creating the world by him. In those views which the Scripture gives of that divine and supreme Jehovah, whom by searching none can find out, the Father and the Son are represented as distinct persons of the same Godhead, and therefore, in a certain sense, distinct agents. The Father creates the world by his Son. But the Son may be, must be of the same nature with the Father, possessing the same perfections. For creation cannot be a delegated work. None but Jehovah can exercise those attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, by which in the works of creation all things were arranged in due number, weight and measure; by which the word was "spoken, and it was done; commanded, and it was created "."

But in reference to the creation of the world, the Apostle represents Christ as the final as well as the efficient cause. "All things were created," not only "by him," but "for him." The manifestation of his wisdom and his power, as the only-begotten of the Father, was the object for which he

created the world; as the display of his mercy and grace, was the design of his redeeming it. And "for him," also, that is to be subject to his dominion, as the Lord of all things, was the world created; as in like manner to be restored to his dominion as Mediator, was an apostate world redeemed. For as the Apostle proceeds to observe-" He is before all things, and by him all things, consist." He, who, as the Creator of all things was necessarily before them, is also the preserver of all things-" by him all things consist." In him all things live, and move, and have their being. By him, the innumerable worlds, which his almighty hand fixed throughout the regions of boundless space, are preserved and regulated in their movements; so that order and harmony reign throughout the spheres. By him, the innumerable grades of intelligent beings, the unnumbered hosts of the universe, the myriads of angels that inhabit heaven, the multitude that peoples this earth (lost, however, as they would be in the countless mass of the assembled intelligences that fill countless worlds)-by him they are all continued in that intellectual existence which from him they derived; on him are they dependant for the exercise of their various and high faculties; and by him are they regulated in their spiritual and lofty operations.

Brethren—in what more express, forcible and sublime terms, could Jehovah be set forth as the

creator and preserver of all things? Would it be derogatory to the majesty and glory of the one fiving and true God, to exhibit in these expressions his creating and conserving power? Would it not be as blasphemous as absurd, to ascribe. in language so lofty and explicit, so varied, minute and forcible, the creation and preservation of all things, to any Being himself created? Can he "by whom all things were created, all things in heaven, all things in earth, all things visible, all things invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers," of whatever order of intelligent beings, angels or men--can he for whom, for the manifestation of whose wisdom and power, as well as to be subject to his sway, they were called into being, and by whom they consist, are preserved and governed—can he be less than the infinite and eternal Creator and preserver of all things, less than the infinite and eternal God? But all this is affirmed by an inspired Apostle of Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ, therefore, must be the infinite and eternal Creator and preserver of all things. Jesus Christ must be the infinite and eternal God.

The passage which I have explained to you, is decisive evidence of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and refutes all the heresics by which his divinity has been assailed. Were there no other passage

in the Bible relative to his divine character, this alone would authorise us to believe in him as our God and our Lord. And this single passage also refutes all the heresies that have assailed his Divine person. His Divinity has indeed been acknowledged by the great body of Christians, in all places, and at all times. Yet at various periods, different heresies have arisen, with respect to this fundamental truth.

The Godhead is distinguished in several passages of Scripture, under the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the orthodox faith has been, that these titles denote individual persons, or distinct agents, incomprehensibly united in the same divine substance, possessing each the same divine nature. But in the third century, the heresy was started which acknowledged only a nominal distinction in the Divine nature, maintaining that Father, Son and Holy Ghost, were in all respects one; and that these titles only designated different characters, and different modes of manifestation of the one God. This heresy first advanced by Praxeas, being afterwards more strenuously asserted by Sabellius, was called from him the Sabellian heresy. passage which we have been considering, refutes this opinion, which denies a real distinction of persons in the Godhead; since the Son is spoken of as a distinct agent, from the Father, the Creator and preserver of all things.

In the beginning of the fourth century, the Arian heresy arose, so called from Arias, a presbyter of Alexandria, who maintained the essential distinction between the nature of the Son and that of the Father-asserting that there was a time when the Son was not, yet that he was the first and the most exalted of God's creatures; though essentially inferior to the Father, both in nature and dignity. But this heresy is refuted by the passage which we have been considering -since he cannot be a created being, by whom " all creatures were created," and must be eternal. who was "before all things."

In the sixteenth century, Lalius and Faustus Socious carried still further the heresy of Arianism. Denying the Arian doctrine that Christ was the first and most exalted of all creatures, possessing and exercising by delegation divine attributes and power, they maintained, that he was a mere man, who never existed before he came into the world; but as a man, more pure and perfect than any other of the human race. The passage which we have been considering, subverting the Arian hypothesis of the created nature of Christ, of course demolishes the Socinian heresy-For he who was "before all things," necessarily existed before he came into the world; and he who "made all things," all orders of intelligent creatures. angels as well as men, must be superior to

angels, to men, to all created beings; must be the infinite and adorable Creator.

These heresies of Sabellianism, Arianism and Socinianism, under various modifications, according to the notions of different individuals, prevail in modern times, and distinguish those who designate themselves as "Unitarians;" maintaining with the orthodox the unity of the Godhead, but denying the doctrine of the eternal and proper divinity of Christ, and of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead.

But, my brethren, the Christian Church is now assailed by a heresy which maintaining the divinity of Christ, denies his eternal generation, expressed in Scripture by the terms "own Son," "only-begotten Son of God." And this heresy too, the passage which we have been considering confutes. It asserts the *eternal* divinity of Christ, as the image of the invisible God, the Creator and disposer of all things—And it denotes his eternal derivation from the Father, by the phrase, "image

our Saviour's divinity, I have spoken of them under the name of Unitarians; which however is an improper appellation, when used to distinguish them from other Christians, who, while they believe the divinity of our Lord, assert the divine unity as strenuously as the Unitarians themselves. The term Humanitarian is more proper; but it is hardly come into general use." Preface to Lectures on the Gospel of St. John, as bearing testimony to the Divinity of our Saviour, by C. J. Blomfield, D. D. Rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, and Archdeucon of Colchester.

of the invisible God," which implies an original, whose nature the image derives; and still further by the phrase applied to the Son—" born before every creature," born in eternity, and of course, emanating from all eternity from the Father.

All these truths defy the comprehension of human reason; baffe and confound her keenest search. But so does the being of an infinite and eternal God—the existence of an uncaused cause of all things. Is it not apparent, that with respect to all doctrines concerning the Divine nature, the simple inquiry is—Are they revealed?

Brethren, we are not to sit in judgment on the human heart. We cannot penetrate the hidden sources of human opinions. Nor can we account for the fact, that individuals, whom charity delights to think are equally honest in their intentions, arrive at different results in their inquiries after truth. I trust you are satisfied that the doctrines which have now been exhibited to you relative to the person of Jesus Christ, are fairly drawn from the passage of sacred writ which we have been considering. That they are supported by the uniform tenor of the Holy Scriptures, it would not be difficult to shew. That they are the doctrines of the universal Church, will not admit of a doubt; since they are contained in creeds which that Church has universally received. Make not shipwreck of your

faith, in doubting or renouncing them. They are "the power of God unto salvation."

Whenever you are tempted to deny the divinity of the Lord who bought you—fortify yourselves by the language of the sublime passage which has been set before you. Is it possible that he can be a creature, can be less than God, who is "the image of the invisible God—first born before every creature—by whom all things were created in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers—by whom and for whom all things were created—who is before all things, and by whom all things consist!"

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST-THE MEDIATOR.

1 TIM. ii. 5.

One Mediator between God and man.

The mediation of Christ is a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. This divine system conveys no truth intelligibly, if it does not announce that contained in the text—there is "one Mediator between God and man." It is a truth which pervades the Bible from its beginning to its close; from that promise which proclaimed a Mediator between the Sovereign of the universe and his offending creatures in "the seed of the woman a;" to the exhibition of the everlasting chorus of praise, sent forth in the Church triumphant by the spirits that are redeemed, "to him who loved them, who washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God."

We see this truth in the blood of the atoning victim under the Jewish law, in the sprinkling of this blood on the mercy-seat by the High Priest to make expiation. We see the Mediator, in him whom the Prophet represented as beholding that "there was no man, and wondering that there was no intercessor," and then bringing salvation by his own arm. We see this mediation set forth in the humiliation, the sufferings, the death of the only-begotten of the Father, in the blood which he shed upon the cross; and we hear it solemnly announced in the declaration that he ascended into heaven, and there "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

In calling your attention then to the mediation of Christ, I present to you a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel.—" There is one *Mediator* between God and man," and "no man cometh unto the Father but by him"."

Let us then consider

- I. The character of the Mediator,
- H. The nature of his mediation, and
- III. The practical tendency of the doctrine.
- ^e Isa. lix. 16. d Heb. vii. 25. c. John xiv. 6.

I. The character of the Mediator.

My brethren—If you consult your own hearts, conscience will tell you that you " have done the things which you ought not to have done, and left undone the things which you ought to have done." Alas! innumerable infirmities and sorrows add their weight to the burden of our transgressions. In this state of guilt and of sin, it is impossible that we should enjoy the favour of that holy Being, who is " of purer eyes than to behold iniquity'," and "in whose sight the heavens are not clean "." We need, therefore, a Mediator, who in our own nature may interpose between us and the holiness of God, so that we may approach him and live; one, who suffering in the nature which had offended, may reconcile that nature unto God; and who, sustaining our infirmities and sorrows, will feel for us that sympathy which a common nature only can excite; and whose intercession for us will be animated by a feeling for our infirmities.

But when we look to the throne of God, and behold his indignation roused against our sins; when even a distant view of the Divine Majesty and power confounds and overwhelms us—we eagerly inquire, What can appease that indig-

⁶ Hab. i. 13.

nation? Surely that merit only which is of infinite value. Who can approach the throne of the Eternal, and mediate with the dread Sovereign, before whose glory angels veil their faces and cast their crowns?—Surely that Being only who is higher and purer and more powerful than angels—high, pure, and powerful as God himself!

But on this subject, the Scriptures settle the speculations of reason, and reveal a Mediator such as man needs, and as the high and Holy One will admit to his presence.

Christ Jesus, brethren, was made in all things, sin only excepted, like unto one of us. He was "born of a woman"." He was the helpless infant, the obscure youth, the persecuted man. Our sins and sorrows he carried—and they forced from him drops of blood; they caused him to pour forth his soul in the agonies of death. We cannot doubt that our Mediator was man—in all respects of the same nature with ourselves.

But this cloud of humiliation, covered a glory which, if not thus concealed, would have overwhelmed us with its effulgence. It was the glory of the Godhead; the glory which Christ "had with the Father before the world was"." It was the glory, of which the splendour with which he was surrounded, when on

^{*} Gal. iv. 4.

John xvii. 5.

the mount of transfiguration "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light!" was a faint image—the glory which will shine forth with still brighter lustre, when he will come to judge the nations; "his face as a burning flame, and his legs as pillars of fire"—the glory which, through all eternity, will command the praises of the company of heaven, adoring the Lord Jesus Christ as the "express image of the Father's person!," "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty"."

Jesus Christ then partakes of the nature of both the parties between whom he mediates. As God he is fitted to approach the throne of the Eternal, and to urge there a prevailing intercession; while allied as man, by the participation of a common nature, to the fallen creature for whom he intercedes, he is touched with a sympathy which animates his intercession and inspires us with confidence in it.

The character of the Mediator possessing both the divine and human nature, qualifies him for offering a prevailing mediation.

II. The *nature* of this *mediation*, was the second division of this discourse.

^k Matt. xvii. 2. ¹ Heb. i. 3. ^m Rev. i. 8.

In entering on his great work of mediation, the Son of God found man in a state of *ignorance* and insensibility; blind to spiritual things, imperfectly acquainted with the attributes and will of God, utterly ignorant of the mode of obtaining the favour of his dread Sovereign, and unable to penetrate, with the clear and steady eye of faith, the region of darkness beyond the grave.

Thus then it was necessary that our Mediator should assume the office of a Prophet; and as a Prophet, Jesus Christ performed the office of Mediator. Coming from the bosom of the Father, and the throne of the Godhead, he was intimately acquainted with the Divine counsels and will; and assuming human nature, he softened the effulgence of the Divine Maiesty by the mildness, the sympathy, and the tenderness of the meekest of the human race. While he thus armed his instructions with the glory and the power of the Godhead, he carried them to our hearts by the softness and the condescension, with which, as one of ourselves, he uttered and urged them. He exhibited the whole circle of religious knowledge and duty; unveiled as far as mortal eye can bear, the nature, the purity, and the glory of God; established with clearness and with energy, those laws which, originating in the will of the Eternal, are suited to the character and relations of man, and calculated to advance his

perfection and felicity; opened the way of access to the Divine favour which sin had closed; and unfolded, as far as is necessary to establish our faith and to elevate our hope, the scenes of eternal bliss.

But the Son of the Father, in assuming the office of Mediator, found man not only blind and ignorant, but obnoxious to wrath. Sin had alienated him from the Divine favour, and subjected him to the displeasure of that dread Sovereign, whose holiness and justice demand that the guilty contemners of his authority, and violators of his laws, should be punished.

Thus then it was necessary that our Mediator should assume the office of a *Priest*, in order that he might reconcile us to God. And as a Priest, Jesus Christ, performs for us the two-fold offices of atonement and intercession.

He performed the office of making atonement, by fulfilling to the uttermost the requisitions and the penalties of the law, which man had violated, and which the authority of God demanded should be established and preserved. While by assuming the nature of man, he was enabled to fulfil the requisitions of the law, and to sustain its penalties, his nature as God impressed that obedience with divine perfection, and conferred on the reparation which he offered to the

offended Majesty of heaven, infinite value and efficacy.

This reparation was the shedding of his own most precious blood. Here, as in innumerable cases, more adapted to her capacity, and within the sphere of her operations, reason must confess her weakness. The propitiation of sin by the shedding of blood, is one of those secrets which the Almighty Father hath kept within his own power. The mystery of our redemption by the blood of Christ, angels desire to look into. The host of the redeemed shall contemplate it with increasing clearness, rapture, and awe, through the ages of eternity. But it is a "profound" of Divine Wisdom, which man is not permitted to fathom.

Still it is a truth, because God hath so ordained, that "by the shedding of blood, is the remission of sin"." If we explore in the successive periods of time, every nation, whether depressed by ignorance, or enlightened by science, we behold the altar, the victim, and the priest. The victim is slain; its blood poured upon the altar; and this blood, the intercessor offers as propitiating incense to heaven. In this early and this universal practice of mankind, we recognize the finger of God establishing a mode of pro-

ⁿ Heb. ix. 22,

pitiating his justice which human reason never could have devised. The altar, the victim. and the priest, originating in divine institution, extended through every age and nation; constituted the principal characteristic of the rites which the Jewish legislator imposed on the chosen people of God: and denoted and prefigured that altar of divine justice, on which the Son of God in the person of man, himself the victim and the priest, should be offered to make atonement for sin. It is the language of the Scrip-"The blood of Christ cleanseth tures of truth. from sin." "He was made a curse for us." "He suffered for our sins," "We are redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ ":" and to him the redeemed will for ever render praise and glory, that he "washed them from their sins in his own blood p."

By the shedding of his blood, Jesus Christ, as our High Priest, made atonement; and by the presentation of the merits of this blood before his Almighty Father in heaven, does he *intercede* for us, and thus complete his gracious office. "Christ," as our High Priest, "hath entered into heaven" (saith the Apostle) "there to appear in the presence of God for us." Heaven is that true holy of holies, that dwelling place of God

 ¹ John i. 7. Gal. iii. 13. 1 Peter i. 18, 19.
 P Rev. i. 5. 4 Heb. ix. 24.

where he exhibits his glory, of which the holy of holies of the Jewish tabernacle was a type. Into this holy of holies, like the High Priest on the day of expiation, Jesus Christ, our divine High Priest, hath entered clothed with the garments of holiness, and bearing the crown of glory. He presents before the mercy-seat of heaven, not "the blood of bulls and of goats," but his own most precious blood—that blood which infinite in merit, avails to our reconciliation with God.

This is the picture of our Saviour's intercession, drawn by an inspired Apostle. Without doubt, it is figurative: for we are not to suppose a material mercy-seat in heaven, on which Christ sprinkles that blood which was shed upon the cross. But this emblematic representation must have some important signification; and no other meaning can we assign it, than that it pleases God, in consideration of the merits of the blood of Christ, to accept his intercession in our behalf, and to extend to us all those blessings of pardon and grace and life which Christ purchased for us by the shedding of his blood. God, in his sovereign pleasure, hath ordained this mode of restoring us to his favour—and shall we say unto him, Why doest thou this? Alas! is it not the greatest folly, is it not guilt of the deepest aggravation, to reject that mercy which comes to us only through the blood of the Great Intercessor, because we know not by what

efficacy this blood avails to our salvation? Surely it will be worse than folly to reject pardon, grace, everlasting life, because we cannot comprehend the means by which they are conveyed to us!

But in his office of Mediator, the object of which is to rescue us from the penalties which by transgression we have incurred, and to restore us completely to the Divine favour, the Son of God beholds us, not only in a state of guilt and obnoxious to wrath, but subjected to sin, exposed to temptation, and doomed to death.

Thus then it was necessary that our Mediator should exercise the office of a King to redeem us from sin, to defend us from temptation, and to rescue us from death. We behold this King, in Him whom "God hath exalted to be Prince and a Saviour," "set as his King on the holy hill of Zion'," and made "Head over all things to his Church t." We behold Jesus Christ as our King and ruler, vested with "all power in heaven and in earth "," and exercising this power for our defence and salvation. We behold him sending forth his Holy Spirit, to establish through the ministry and ordinances of that Church which he hath constituted, his laws in our hearts, and thus to redeem us from the dominion of sin x. We

r Acts v. 31.

⁵ Psalm ii. 6.

^t Eph. i. 22.

^u Matt. xxviii. 18.

^{* 1} Cor. xii. 13. John iv. 13. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

behold him "afflicted in all our afflictions," and "having been himself tempted," knowing how to pity and to "succour" us y. We behold him, almighty in power, granting to our prayers and to our faith, that "grace" which "will be sufficient" to carry us through the severest trials, and that "strength" which "will be made perfect" in every weakness of nature". We behold all things committed to his hands a; and he over-rules all these things for our good b. In that last and great urgency, when our strength and our heart fail, and the shadows of death are drawing over us—he will be present with us, addressing to us a voice, which will animate us with invincible confidence, and lead us to victory—"Be not afraid, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. The keys of death and hell are with me; and through me who hath loved you, you shall be conquerors "." Conducting our souls to the invisible place, which he sanctified by his presence^d, there to rest in hope and bliss; on that morn of the resurrection which wakes the sleeping myriads of the tomb, he will bring them from this receptacle of the departed; and summoning our bodies from the repose of the grave, will "change us by his mighty power into his glorious likeness"."

⁷ Heb. ii. 18. ² 2 Cor. xii. 9. ^a Matt. xi. 27.

Rom. viii. 28. Saiah xli. 10. Rev. i. 18. Rom. viii. 37. Luke xxiii. 43. Philip. iii. 21.

Judging the quick and the dead, and awarding the destinies of eternity, he will exalt his faithful people on clouds of light and splendour, amidst the shouts of triumph and the songs of praise, to seats of glory eternal in 'he heavens. And his work of mediation thus finished in the complete salvation of his redeemed, he will surrender the kingdom to God, even the Father, and henceforth, through eternal ages, reign as the King of glory.

Follow with the eye of faith, O Christians, these successive scenes of victory and triumph, and adore your divine Mediator as that King and Ruler, through whom you have salvation.

The views which we have taken of the character of the Mediator, and of the nature of his mediation, have prepared us for illustrating,

III. Its practical tendency.

The doctrine may be incomprehensible; while its practical results may be clear and intelligible. We cannot comprehend the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the Mediator; nor the cause why the shedding of his blood should make atonement for sin; nor the mode by which this blood gives efficacy to his intercession. Still we perceive many important practical results of this doctrine of Mediation

- 1. In reference to God, and
- 2. In reference to Man.

1. In reference to God; it establishes his authority; it exalts his holiness; it vindicates his justice; it displays his mercy.

That authority, the violation of which in the least degree with impunity would weaken the pillars that sustain the moral universe, is now established. Man had assailed this authority. No less reparation is made than the perfect obedience and infinite sufferings of the Son of God.

That holiness, which it would be impious to suppose God could permit to be sullied, is now infinitely exalted. For such is the holy abhorrence which God manifests for sin, that he accepts the services of sinful man only when they are presented through the Mediation, and urged by the intercession of an almighty Advocate.

That justice, which is firm and immoveable as the everlasting hills; and which is the essential attribute of a righteous Governor of the universe, is now awfully vindicated. It had pronounced the penalty—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die ""—and justice exacted the penalty, though the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of God was the victim.

[&]quot; Ezekiel xviii. 4.

And yet in this dispensation, through a Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, who was the Son of God, the divine attribute of mercy is illustriously displayed. For it is the object of that atonement and intercession of the Mediator which God accepts, to extend parden, and saivation, and everlasting life to the whole of the guilty race of mankind. "God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life *."

The attributes of God are thus established and exhibited through the intervention of a divine Mediator.

The same doctrine has the most important effects,

2. In reference to man.

It impresses on him the evil and guilt of sin—it inspires him with hope and confidence—it animates him to the highest acts of obedience.

No picture, even drawn by the pen of inspiration, could have so forcibly exhibited the evil and guilt of sin, as that which is afforded in the cross of Christ. A Divine personage, in the agony of his spirit, sweating drops of blood;

sustaining the most ignominious and aggravated sufferings; sinking in the pangs of a death embittered by the dereliction of those consolations which, from all eternity, he had enjoyed—Who can behold the cross, and not shudder at the guilt of his sins!

And yet, who can behold the cross, and not rejoice in the hope of the fulness of pardon. "If God spared not his own son, but freely gave him up a propitiation for our sins z," who can despair of mercy? Here is a confidence, penitent sinner, which will defy all the assaults of the adversary. A fountain is opened for thee, not in the blood of bulls and of goats, but in that blood which cleanseth from all sin,-" Wash and be clean." "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool a." The Mediator, who intercedes for thee, is armed with almighty power, and his intercession is all-prevailing. He bore thy sins and carried thy sorrows, and thou art sure of his sympathy. His language, now that he is seated on the throne of the universe, is the same which in infinite compassion he uttered when he wandered without a place to lay his head-" Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest b." "Whosoever cometh to me, I will

² Rom. iii. 25. ² 1 John i. 7. Is. i. 18. ^b Matt. xi. 28.

in no wise cast out." Oh! what a sure ground of confidence have they who flee for refuge to this hope set before them.

And in the mediation of their Divine Saviour what animating motives do they behold to the highest acts of *obedience*.

Is no return due to him, who is constantly interceding for them at the right hand of his Father, and who shed his blood to give efficacy to that intercession; who, "the brightness of the Father's glory," condescended to make himself of no reputation, and to suffer for them the death of the cross, that he might be exalted to be their Prince and Saviour, and by his intercession rescue them from death and condemnation, reinstate them in his Father's favour, and exalt them to the glories of heaven? Christians! your Mediator demands your liveliest affection, for he is your friend and your brother. He claims your homage and obedience, for he is your God.

There is but one "Mediator between God and man;" and he is "the man Jesus Christ." He is also the "King of kings and Lord of lords "." An interest in his mediation can alone save any of the guilty race of man from perdition, and exalt them to happiness in the world beyond the grave. This interest is obtained only by a true and living faith—A faith which, regarding him

in his office as a Prophet, humbly receives his Divine instructions and illuminations; which, embracing him as an atoning Priest and Intercessor, confides in the merits of his precious blood and intercession; and acknowledging him as a King and Ruler, obeys his laws, and submits to his ordinances. This, then, Christians, should be the subject of your inquiry; this the object of your solicitude-Whether you have that true and living faith which interests you in the mediation of the great Intercessor. Delude not yourselves with a superficial, a vague, an inoperative faith. The faith which will justify you by the blood of Christ, must lead you to hold constant communion with the Saviour, and to go unto the Father through him. It must divest you of all self-dependance, of all trust in your own righteousness as a ground of acceptance, and excite you earnestly, steadily, with prayer, with watchfulness, with labour, to follow after that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord;" and to cherish "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are lovely and of good report "." If we have not this faith, Christians, rest assured, we are deluding ourselves with a name to live, while we are dead. If we have not this faith, we are destitute of an interest in the merits of

^{*} Philippians iv. 8.

the Great Mediator. And what then is our situation? Out of Christ, "God is a consuming fire"." Behold, in the glowing description of the Prophets, the effects of his indignation. "Tophet is ordained of old—it is prepared for the unbelieving and the ungodly. The breath of the Lord, as a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it"." Oh! my soul, is it possible that this may be thy destiny, and canst thou be at ease?

f Heb. xii. 29.

g Isaiah xxx. 33.

SERMON XVIII.

CHRIST-A HIGH PRIEST.

HEB. iv. 14, 15, 16.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

My Brethren—if we should regard Jesus Christ not as a Divine Saviour from the dominion and penalties of sin, but merely as an instructor in truth and virtue, we should entertain very inadequate ideas of his character. If we should strip Jesus Christ of his Divinity, the cross of his atonement, and the throne of the Majesty on high of his intercession, we should not only act unreasonably, in rejecting truths sufficiently attested, merely because like many other truths which we

shew that we greatly erred in our estimate of our own condition, and of our spiritual wants.

What is the conclusion which results from an accurate view of the character and condition of man? Is it that he is under the guidance of truth, and the dominion of virtue? Alas-errors involving often absurdity as well as danger, and follies and vices leading to disgrace as well as misery, have been embraced and committed by men whose vigorous intellect could penetrate into the most profound recesses of science, and explore the widest range of human knowledge. On the most charitable estimate of human nature, we must confess that it is more or less under the dominion of ignorance, prejudice and corrupt passion. On this great stage of human life, through the successive periods of its duration, there is a perpetual contest between error and truth, vice and virtue; the cunning deceiving the simple, the powerful oppressing the weak, and vice and misery triumphing over the virtuous and the good.

What is the conclusion in which this survey of human nature would result? It is that which constitutes the basis of that plan of salvation, which the pride of human reason sometimes undervalues or rejects—that we are fallen and sinful creatures. And my brethren; when we consider the relations which as fallen and sinful

creatures we sustain to the almighty Being who made us, and to whom we are finally accountable; when we endeavour to unravel the mystery, which excites so much solicitude, in what way and on what terms the holy and just Governor of the universe can restore the transgressors of his laws to his favour; when with the glimmering torch of reason, we seek to explore the darkness that surrounds the throne of an offended God, and to dispel the shades that rest upon the world to come—what is the conclusion which will force itself upon our minds? Is it not that contained in the text, and which characterises the Gospel— That erring, sinful, and obnoxious to punishment, we need not only a Divine Instructor, but a Divine Saviour-in the language of the text, a "High Priest," to atone for our sins, and "set on the right hand of the Majesty on high" to intercede for our pardon.

Yes—reason admits that the offended justice of God must be satisfied; that his infinite holiness must be vindicated; that the penalties of the violated law of the Sovereign of the universe must be sustained; that a propitiation for sin must declare the indignation with which it is regarded by a holy and just God, and at the same time the readiness of this merciful Father of all to pardon the penitent sinner. And the history of man confirms the deductions of reason. Look at the hecatombs that were sacrificed on the

altars of unknown gods. Survey the costly rites by which unenlightened man sought to engage in his behalf the intercession of inferior divinities with the supreme Deity. This is the voice of nature attesting the truths which reason suggests, and for which the Gospel alone provides; that man is guilty; that conscience warns him of a judgment to come; and that the sense of guilt, the apprehension of merited wrath, prompt him to seek a Mediator who, propitiating his sins, should restore him to the favour of his offended God. Reason and nature, when not controlled by pride or prejudice, receive with joy the truth which is the animating theme of the Apostlethat "we have an High Priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God."

Let us then consider, as set forth in the text,

—The priesthood of Christ.

- I. The nature of the priesthood of Christ.
- II. The qualifications of Christ for the office.
- III. The duties and consolations which result from it.
 - I. The priesthood of Christ-its nature.

The patriarchal and legal dispensations, all preparatory to the Christian, were principally

designed to set forth the character and office of the promised Messiah, as the great High Priest of our profession. The sacrifices and the priesthood which characterized both these dispensations, can be assigned to no other origin than Divine institution. In the view of human reason there is no connection between the shedding of blood and the remission of guilt. And reason therefore would never have suggested the death of an animal as a sacrifice for sin. When, indeed, animal sacrifice was instituted, the sentiment of guilt led men universally to practise this rite; because it was the pledge of that reconciliation and pardon, which they so much needed, and which they so ardently desired. But so repugnant to reason is the supposition, that the "blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin," that the connection between the shedding of blood and the remission of guilt must have been established by that Almighty Being who can give the most powerful efficacy to institutions which, in themselves, are utterly inefficient.

The priesthood and the sacrifices of the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations were constituted by God; and were designed in his mysterious counsels to prefigure and to denote that atoning sacrifice which, by the shedding of his own blood, Jesus the great High Priest of

our profession, should make for the sins of the world.

According to Divine appointment, the two principal acts of the priestly office were atonement and intercession. The former was made by the shedding of the blood of an animal devoted and offered to God; and the act of intercession was the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar. Thus, among the Jews, according to the requisitions of the law, the priests and the people on the annual day of expiation, made a confession of their sins over an animal appointed for the sacrifice. This, as the representative of their guilt, was then slain. His blood was car ried by the high priest within the vail that separated the Holy of Holies from the outer courts of the temple; and was sprinkled on the mercyseat, the symbol of the Divine Majesty, as an act of propitiation and intercession for the people a.

In these emblematic ceremonies are set forth the atonement and intercession of Jesus Christ our great High Priest. Like the lamb of the Jewish law, to whom were imputed the sins of the people, Jesus "the Lamb of God" bore our iniquities; and like that lamb, slain as an expiation, he was "wounded for our transgressions." In him, indeed, were wonderfully united the

² Lev. xvi.

victim and the priest. And like the high priest who entered into the holy of holies to sprinkle the blood of expiation on the mercy-seat, Jesus Christ our merciful High Priest, after having shed his blood for us, "passed into the heavens," and in this true holy of holies ceases not to intercede for us; his intercession being figuratively denoted by his presenting the infinite merits of his precious blood before the mercy-seat of God.

There is no character in which Jesus Christ is more distinctly set forth to us than in that of a priest, making atonement and intercession "by his blood." "In all things," saith the Apostle, concerning Christ, "it became him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God b." Jesus Christ is that "Apostle and High Priest of our profession," who "for the sins of the people," "offered up himself, making reconciliation;" and having effected our "redemption by his blood," "entered into the holy place," "into heaven itself;" and, in his human nature, is "crowned with glory and honour;" and "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," "appearing in the presence of God for us," "consecrated" to "an unchangeable

^h Heb. ii. 17.

priesthood," he "ever liveth to make intercession for us"."

The reason why the shedding of blood should make expiation, must be resolved into the inscrutable appointment of God. And the mode of Christ's intercession in heaven, represented by the high priest's sprinkling the expiatory blood on the mercy seat of the ark in the Holy of Holies, is evidently figurative. We cannot suppose that there is a material mercy-seat in heaven, or any actual presentation of the blood of the allsufficient victim. But the fact of the Priesthood of Christ, exercised in making atonement by his sufferings and death, and in making intercession by pleading before his almighty Father, the merits of his sufferings and death is so plainly and fully revealed, that the denial of this doctrine would subvert the very foundations of the Gospel.

II. The qualifications of Christ for his priestly office—is the second point to be considered.

If human reason were required to find a complete expiation for sin, and an effectual intercession for transgressors, surely she would immediately demand a perfect victim and a Divine in-

^{&#}x27;Heb. iii. 1. Heb. vii. 27, 28. ii. 17. Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. Rev. i. 5. Heb. ix. 12, 24. x. 20, 21. Heb. ii. 9. Heb. iv. 15. Heb. ix. 24. vii. 25, 26. 28.

tercessor. None but a victim, perfect and without blemish, and therefore Divine, could make atonement for the sins of the whole world. None but the propitation of such a victim, could sustain the scrutiny of infinite holiness and justice. No intercession could be availing but that which should be enforced by obedience that was full and perfect, and by sufferings that were of infinite value.

But while a Divine victim, and an almighty Intercessor thus appeared indispensable, it was also necessary—in order to obey the violated law, to sustain the penalty, and thus to make expiation, and to offer the intercession; in order to embolden man oppressed with guilt and filled with apprehension, to avail himself of the proffered atonement and intercession—that the victim should be human, and that the intercessor should be man; that the high priest, who was to atone and to intercede for us, should be of the same nature with ourselves, and thus be "touched with a feeling of our infirmities."

But where was to be found a victim, that should be thus human and Divine, man and yet God. In the innumerable orders of angelic beings, was there one that could call his Creator his equal? "God sent forth his Son'"—emphatically "his only-begotten Son'"—and therefore partaker of his nature—him who is styled,

k Gal. iv. 4.

¹ 1 John iv. 9, 10.

"the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person "—him who it is said "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God "—" God was thus manifest in the flesh "."

Here then were the victim, and here also the intercessor whom guilty man required. The Son of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, became our merciful and gracious "High Priest." The law which man had violated required the death of the trangsressor, the forfeit of his blood. The sins of man, therefore, were imputed to Jesus Christ, as the representative of man's guilt; and the Divine nature of Christ rendered his sufferings and death of infinitely more avail, than would have been the sufferings and death of the whole human race. Jesus Christ discharged the priestly office of atonement, by the shedding of his blood. He has ascended to exercise the priestly office of intercession, at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. And his Divine nature renders his intercession, like his atonement, all-sufficient and prevailing.

But can this Divine and almighty intercessor be touched with a feeling for our infirmities? Can the infinitely exalted and perfect Son of God, participate in the feelings of frail and miserable man? Yes—my brethren—great as is the

m Heb. î. 3. n Philip ii. 6. n 1 Tim. îii. 16.

mystery—the Son of God in our nature enters deeply and fully into all our feelings and wants. For in that nature, "being himself also tempted, he knows how to pity and to succour them that are tempted." How great ground of confidence have they who flee for refuge to this hope set before them. Oh—"the depths both of the wisdom and goodness of God—How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out?."

III. What are the duties and consolations resulting from the great truths that we have "an High Priest;" as God, "mighty to save," as man, "touched with a feeling for our infirmities?"

Let us "hold fast our profession"—our faith in his gracious atonement and intercession. Let not the cavils of human pride, the objections of a vain glorious reason, nor the scoffs of a sceptical philosophy, diminish our confidence in those doctrines, which are the prominent truths of the Gospel, and the foundation of all our hopes, that, as sinners obnoxious to Divine justice, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"—who as our Divine and merciful "High Priest," by the shedding of his blood

^p Heb. ii. 18. ^q Rom. xi. 33. ^r 1 John ii. 1.

hath reconciled us to God, and by his prevailing intercession procures for us pardon, and grace, and everlasting life.

Incomprehensible these truths indeed are. The union of the Divine and human nature, in the person of Christ; the mode of expiation by the shedding of his blood; the efficacy of his intercession, by pleading the merits of this blood before his almighty Father, transcend the comprehension of the human mind. But should this excite our wonder or our cavils! How many things are in the occurrences and objects of nature. and how much in the structure and operations of our own minds, for which we cannot account, and which by no efforts of our reason we are able to comprehend! And shall we then wonder, shall we then doubt, because the things that pertain to that infinite and eternal Being, whom no man hath seen or can see, transcend our comprehension? In the objects of sense and of consciousness, we deem it folly to attempt to proceed beyond the plain region of facts, and to penetrate into the essences and causes of things. And is it then extraordinary that, when in divine, spiritual, and invisible objects, we advance beyond the plain practical truths connected with them, and speculate on things abstruse, on God, on spirit, on eternity, our reason is baffled and confounded?

My brethren—God has sent his Son into the world. He is our Divine and "merciful High Priest;" who by the shedding of his blood, by his sufferings and death, hath made a sacrifice for sin, and by his intercession restores us to the favour of God. Having paid the penalty of the Divine law which we had violated, he has thus vindicated the justice and holiness, and maintained the righteous government of God; and assured to us the consolatory truth, that "God can be just and yet justify us sinners."

In the doctrines of the atonement and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, as far as respects their practical influence, the duties and the consolations which result from them, every thing is plain and intelligible to the humblest understanding. When indeed we advance beyond the practical views of these doctrines, and seek to comprehend how the Son can be one with the Father; in what way, in the person of the gracious High Priest of our profession, the Divine nature can be united to the human; and in what mode atonement and intercession are effected and rendered availing by his sufferings and death, we become perplexed and confounded. Nor is this extraordinary. For divine and spiritual truths can never be fully comprehended

¹ Rom. iii. 26.

by finite minds. Even in that state "where we shall know even as we are known'," we shall behold and adore the glory of the Godhead—but his *nature* will be past finding out.

Let us not, then, seeking to be wise above what is written, neglect the duties and the consolations which arise from the truths of God's word, and vainly attempt to scan by our feeble reason, his inscrutable nature and dispensations. It is our wisdom, as it is our duty, and will prove our happiness, to receive on the testimony of God, those truths which he has revealed as necessary to our salvation, even though like innumerable truths of nature, they may transcend our comprehension. Let us "hold fast our faith" in that gracious High Priest of our profession, Jesus the Son of God, who having expiated our sins, is "set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens "." Let us "hold fast our faith" in him. For, having assumed the throne of almighty power and universal dominion, "he is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through him '." Let us "hold fast our faith" in him-for, of what punishment will they be thought worthy, who "refuse him that speaketh from heaven y," who have trodden under foot the Son of God'." What

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "Heb. viii. 1. xii. 2. "Heb. vii. 25. Heb. xii. 25. "Heb. xi. 25. "Heb. xi. 29.

saith the Prophet? "The kings of the earth may rise up, the people may take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision. He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel "."

Where is the man whose conscience does not accuse him of having sinned, and whose corrupt passions are not prompting him to transgression? Where is the man who does not find the world as full of temptations hostile to his virtue, as of sorrows fatal to his peace? Where is the man who in approaching the region of the grave, does not wish for a guide through this land of darkness?

Brethren—there is a guide and a refuge for us. We have a gracious High Priest, who is "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens",—our Divine and compassionate Intercessor. His power is almighty; and his sympathy and compassion are equal to his power. Humbled with sorrow for the offences which caused his sufferings, renouncing our sins and trusting only in his merits, we may come boldly to the throne of grace;" for we have the promise, "that we shall find mercy and grace to help in time of need ","—that time of need when

Psalm ii. h Heb. viii. 1.

conscience accuses us, and temptation and sorrow assail us; that time of need, which we must all encounter—the hour of death, the day of judgment.

In this time of our greatest need—in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment—Jesus, Lord, our merciful and gracious Priest and Intercessor, save and deliver us.

SERMON XIX.

CHRIST-SACRIFICED FOR US.

[EASTER.]

1 Cor. v. 7. S.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us—therefore let us keep the feast.

JESUS Christis emphatically styled "the Lambslain from the foundation of the world a,"—slain, from the foundation of the world, in as much as the efficacy of his meritorious sacrifice commenced when the promise of a Divine deliverer was given to our first parents—and slain in all those sacrifices of expiation which, from the beginning, typified that one meritorious sacrifice, to which they owed all their efficacy. The firstling of his flock, which righteous Abel offered to the Lord b; the ram which Abraham devoted as a burnt-offering, instead of Isaac his son c; and all the sacrifices by which the Jews were taught to expiate their sins, typified the "one offering," by

Rev. xiii. 8. Gen. iv. 4. Gen. xxii. 13.

which Christ was to take away the iniquity of us all.

But, in an especial manner, was this great sacrifice set forth in the solemnity of the Jewish passover; so that the Apostle says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us!"

A particular account of the institution of the Jewish passover is contained in the first lesson for this day. And the words of my text, the Church recites as part of the hymn of praise in the morning service of this holy festival. The eminent propriety of this recital will appear, if we take a view of the various respects in which Christ may be styled the Passover.

- I. In reference to his character.
- II. In reference to his death.
- III. In reference to the object of his death, and
- IV. In reference to the *celebration* of this great event.

Christ is styled our Passover,

I. In reference to his character.

In the Jewish passover, a lamb was to be offered. And this lamb was to be "without

d Exod. xii. to v. 37.

blemish "." Jesus Christ, agreeably to the language in which his illustrious forerunner accosted him, was "the Lamb of God f." He was meek and lowly, as this most meek and lowly of the animal creation. He was patient and submissive, as "a lamb led to the slaughter, as a sheep dumb before his shearers, opening not his mouth "." He was a lamb too, "without blemish and without spot," for "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth "." The lamb of the Passover, correctly typified in his character Jesus Christ.

II. In reference to his death, Christ is aptly styled the Passover.

The Paschal lamb was to be slain—and its blood to be poured out. And thus, Christ as "a lamb without spot or blemish," offered himself to God, and his blood was shed upon the cross. It was a particular direction with respect to the Paschal lamb of the Jewish Passover, that though he was to be killed and his blood poured forth, "ye shall not break a bone thereof." What says the Evangelist St. John of Jesus Christ, the true Paschal lamb offered on the cross—"Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first

Exodus xii. 5. John i. 29. Isaiah liii. 7. Acts viii. 32.

and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth, that he saith true that ve might believe. And these things were done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled—a bone of him shall not be broken ." Whole, without a bone broken, was the Paschal lamb offered -whole without a bone broken, was Jesus offered on the cross. The lamb of the Jewish Passover was to be "roasted with fire"," and thus to be prepared as an offering. And surely the fierce anger of the Lord was kindled and burnt with fire against that Lamb who bore the iniquities of us all. The Lord's anger entered into his soul, and dried up his spirits. Says the victim, consumed with the fierce indignation of Jehovah -"My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws-my heart in the midst of my body is even like melting wax n."

At the time too of the celebration of the Jewish Passover, did Christ suffer-his sufferings commenced the day of this festival—and it was the

John xix. 32, &c. Exodus xii. 8. Psalm xxii. 14, 15.

next day about the ninth hour, the hour of the killing of the Paschal lamb, when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, that his passion was finished and he yielded up the ghost. The Paschal lamb was first sacrificed at their departure from Egypt, in the private dwellings of the Jews. But they were directed to offer it afterwards "in the place which the Lord their God should choose to put his name in "." And this at first was wheresoever the ark rested in their journeyings through the wilderness. But after their settlement in the promised land, Jerusalem, the holy city, was the place which God chose in which to put his name. And Jerusalem was the scene of Christ's sufferings and death.

In reference then to his death, and to the circumstances to the time and to the place of his death, may it be said—"Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us"—But,

III. In reference to the *object* of his death, is the resemblance most striking and important between Christ, our Passover—and the Paschal lamb of the Jewish solemnity.

The Paschal lamb was, by Divine institution, a mean and pledge to the Jews of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt—and from

^{*} Deuteronomy xii. 5, &c.

the destruction which God inflicted on the Egyptians. The offering of Christ in the councils of the almighty Father is constituted the mean and pledge of our deliverance from sin and death.

God had determined to deliver the Jews from their cruel bondage in Egypt, and to inflict a signal judgment on their tyrannical oppressors. This was his awful declaration to Moses-"Thus saith the Lord-about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the first-born of the maid servant that is behind the mill, and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast; that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel P." And the Passover was to be the pledge to the children of Israel of this deliverance. The blood of the Paschal lamb was to be struck upon "the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses q," wherein they should eat it. And it was the merciful declaration of the Lord to the Israelites-" The blood shall

q Exodus xii. 7.

be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt "." Agreeably to the Divine institution, this was to be kept for an ordinance for ever. "And it shall come to pass "-was the declaration of Moses to the Israelites, "when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service ?that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses ... Accordingly, in their journeyings through the wilderness, and after their settlement in the promised land, the feast of the Passover was observed by the Jews, with all the solemnities of the first Passover, except those which were peculiar to their exodus from Egypt. The Paschal lamb, a male of the first year, without blemish, was slain in the temple; the blood received by the priests, was sprinkled at the foot of the altar: on the altar the fat was consumed; and the lamb returned to the person by whom it was offered. was carried to the place where it was to be eaten.

"Christ our Passover," says the Apostle, "is sacrificed for us."

The Passover is said to be a sacrifice. In a

Exed. xii. 13.

corresponding sense, Christ was a sacrifice in the offering of himself unto death. If the Jewish Passover be a sacrifice, it follows from the declaration of the Apostle, that the offering of Christ was also a sacrifice.

The Paschallamb in its typical reference to Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, procured the favour of God for the Israelites, and was the mean and pledge to them of exemption from the destruction inflicted on the Egyptians. " Christ our Passover sacrificed for us," procured the favour of God for us, and his sacrifice was the mean and pledge of our salvation from sin and death. And if the death of Christ be a sacrifice, procuring for us the Divine favour, and propitiating Divine justice, it follows that, in order to produce this effect, it must have a meritorious efficacy. But this efficacy can result only from the Divine nature of Christ, who makes the sacrifice. It is impossible that any creature can have that perfection by which he can do more than his duty, and thus make atonement. And it is absurd to suppose that the blood of a mere man, any more than that of bulls and of goats, can take away The expiatory effect of the Jewish sacrifices was derived from their reference to that of the victim of whom they were the type. Prove then, that Christ's death was a sacrifice, and you establish his Divinity. Hence, they

who deny his Divinity, deny that his death was a sacrifice.

But it is expressly asserted—"Christ our Passover is *sacrificed* for us." In the same sense therefore, in which the passover was a sacrifice, must Christ be so styled.

But the passover was a real sacrifice. It is styled repeatedly by the sacred writers—" the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover '." The Paschal lamb was brought like other sacrifices to the temple, and its blood was shed and sprinkled at the altar by the priest, in which consisted the peculiar characteristic of an expiatory sacrifice. Christ then being styled our Passover, was, like that Passover, a real sacrifice.

Important and consolatory, my brethren, are the truths which arise from this view of the subject.

By the blood of the Paschal lamb, the Israelites were assured of their exemption from the Divine judgments inflicted on the Egyptians. By the blood of Christ, all true believers are assured of their salvation from sin and death.

The Egyptians were marked out for destruction by the just sentence of God. At midnight, the hour of calmness and repose, the destroyer

¹ Exod. xii. 37. xxxiv. 25. Lev. xvi. 11. 14, 15, 16.

went forth; and the Egyptians waked with the cry of death in their dwellings. For "the Lord smote the first-born of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth on the throne, to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon"." But on every dwelling of the Israelites appeared the pledge of Divine mercy. The blood of the Paschal Lamb, was seen on their houses. The destroying angel passed by. The cry of death was not heard in the dwellings of the Israelites. Well might this be styled "the Passover; when the Lord passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered their houses"."

We too, brethren, are marked for destruction. Our sins have rendered us obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. Is there an individual who will say that he sinneth not; whose conscience will not testify against him—numerous deficiencies—numerous omissions of duty,—if not numerous violations of the Divine laws? And is there an individual who would say that he is not guilty in the sight of God, that he is not obnoxious to the Divine justice—who, with the sins which load his conscience, would not shrink from the presence of his Almighty Judge; from the scrutiny of that holiness which makes the heavens appear unclean, and fixes upon the

[&]quot; Exod. xii. 29.

^{*} Exod. xii. 27.

angels folly; and from the sentence of that justice which spared not the angels that sinned, and which has denounced woe against every soul of man that doeth evil?

Brethren, we are sinners, and we are doomed to destruction. The destroyer is commissioned to go forth; to execute upon us the sentence of Divine justice - not only temporal death, but death eternal. But for us, as for the Israelites of old, there is redemption. We too have a Paschal Lamb, whose blood is the pledge of salvation. "Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us." His blood was shed a propitiation for sin s. The mysterious victim and the priest, he hath entered, not like the High Priest of old, within the veil of the earthly temple, but beyond that which conceals the true Holy of Holies, even the highest heavens; and with his precious blood sprinkling the mercy seat, appears as our Advocate before the throne of Divine justice, and saves us from destruction2. His blood, in the language of inspired Apostles, is that "blood of sprinkling a," with which in the exercise of faith, using the figurative language of sacred writ, our guilty souls being sprinkled, the destroyer lifts not up his arm against us; he passes by; and we are redeemed from the sentence of destruc-

y Rom. iii. 25. 1 John ii. 2. iv. 10.

² Heb. ix. 11, 12. 24. ³ Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2.

tion. Like the Israelites saved from Egyptian bondage, we are saved by the blood of sprinkling; and go forth from spiritual bondage-" Redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, that Lamb without blemish and without spot "," we. as true believers, are brought into the "glorious liberty of the sons of God '." And, though like the Israelites, journeying through the wilderness to the promised land, we traverse the comfortless region of the world, he who hath wrought for us eternal redemption by the shedding of his blood, is ever present with us; as the "pillar of a cloud" to refresh us, fainting under the toils of our journey—as the "pillar of fire" to illumine and guide and cheer us in the darkness and doubts and sorrows of our course. And in our passage through the "Jordan" of death to the land of heavenly rest and felicity, he will be with us, "mighty to save;" making us conquerors—so that when we "pass through this water, it shall not come upon us, and through this river it shall not overflow usd," and our eternal rest shall be attained with the shout of triumph through our great deliverer —"O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory "-And our everlasting song shall be-"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to re-

^b 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

c Rom. viii. 21.

d Isaiah xliii. 2.

¹ Cor. xv. 55.

ceive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing f."

What is our assurance of all this?

The event which this day calls forth the praises of the Church of the redeemed—the resurrection of Jesus her Divine Lord. He, "our Passover," has been "sacrificed for us." Holy, harmless, undefiled, meek, submissive, patient; he was led as a lamb to the slaughter; as the paschal lamb, his blood was poured forth, the mean and the pledge of deliverance and salvation. And this day he rises to assure us, that the blood which he shed is accepted by Divine justice as a propitiation—that, sprinkled on our souls through

from the deal mass us over; that he, risen lords, holds the keys of kings and Lord of the resurrection and the med hell; that he, of eternal salvation to those we the author him," and that, "through the grave alieve in death, he will conduct them to a joyfurte of rection."

Animated with gratitude and excited by the heavenly hopes—

IV. "Let us keep the feast."

The Passover was to be to the Jews a stand-

Rev. v. 12. Heb. v. 9.

ing memorial of their deliverance from the thraldom of Egypt; "a feast to the Lord throughout their generations;"—an ordinance for ever. A deliverance from temporal death, a redemption from temporal bondage they thus commemorated as an holy feast to the Lord, throughout their generations. Let us, brethren, celebrating an infinitely greater deliverance, an infinitely more exalted redemption, joyfully comply with the exhortation of the Apostle, and "keep the feast."

The Israelites ate of the Paschal Lamb. Let us, by faith, spiritually feed on Jesus Christ. Let us, by faith, realize the divine glory of his person; the all-sufficiency of his atonement; the fulness of his mercy; the efficacy of his grace; the purity and the consolations of his service; the victory which by his resurrection he hath assured to us over death and the grave; and the glorious rest which he hath gone before to prepare for us.

As the memorial of the severity of their bondage in Egypt, the Israelites were to eat the Paschal Lamb "with bitter herbs";" and we, the spiritual participants of the true Passover, are thus reminded of the bitterness with which we are to remember those sins which occasioned the sufferings of the Lamb of God, and for which those sufferings atoned; and of the duty of our

h Exodus xii. 8.

fellowship with him in his sufferings, of our patient submission to the trials which he imposes upon us, if we would reign with him.

The Jews were directed to eat their first Passover "with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand; to eat it in haste';" with the habit and in the posture which became them about to commence a long and toilsome journey. And we, Christians, redeemed by the blood of the true Paschal Lamb from the bondage of sin and death, are to consider ourselves as "strangers and pilgrims upon earth k;" called by our divine Lord to follow him to a heavenly country, through the changes and trials of this world. And is it not then our duty to have "our hearts surely there fixed," where is our home; having "our citizenship in heaven," not to love supremely the world; "risen with Christ," to the hope of a heavenly inheritance, to seek those things which are above; and as strangers and pilgrims to "gird up the loins of our minds and be sober'," and to "abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul "?" And as the Jews, commencing their march from Egypt to the promised land were, as travellers, to eat the Passover "in haste,"so we, on our course to our heavenly country,

Exodus xii. 11.

k Heb. xi. 13.

¹ 1 Peter i. 13. ^m 1 Peter ii. 11.

should "give all diligence to make our calling and election sure ";" "working out our salvation with fear and trembling°," lest our journey be closed before our work is finished.

The Passover of the Jews was also to be eaten "with unleavened bread "-a fit emblem of their sufferings in Egypt, and of the haste with which they left it, preventing them from leavening their bread. And the Apostle, in the verses connected with my text, exhorts us to "keep the feast' of our spiritual deliverance through the blood of "Christ our Passover," "not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Accordingly, celebrating in the whole of our lives the spiritual festival of our redemption from sin and death, through the grace and mercy of our God and Saviour, we are to make it our supreme and constant object to expel from our hearts all malicious and wicked passions, and to cultivate all sincere and true and holy affections.

Lastly—let it be observed —The Passover was to be offered "in the place where God put his name to dwell in q;" first, the tabernacle, and then the temple at Jerusalem. The Christian Church and temple, of which the Jewish Zion

ⁿ 2 Peter i. 10.

[°] Philippians ii. 12.

Exodus xii. 15.

⁹ Deut. xii. 5.

and temple were a type, is now the place where God has recorded his name, and where he dispenses his grace and mercy. In communion then with his Church, with his ministry whom he hath commissioned, in the festivals, the services and the ordinances of this spiritual Zion, let us celebrate our spiritual redemption; for these are the means and pledges by which it is conveyed and assured to us.

Our Lord instituted the Holy Supper, to be the feast of commemoration of the spiritual benefits which he purchased for us. And in this feast, especially on this holy festival, the Church teaches us to celebrate "the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord." This feast therefore let us keep—there let us celebrate the offering of that true Paschal Lamb which hath saved us from the wrath of the destroyer, and purchased eternal redemption for us. And let us make the celebration, not "with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Then we shall be "assured of God's favour and goodness towards us; that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of his Son; and heirs through hope of his everlasting kingdom, by the death and passion and resurrection of his dear Son;" that "very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world; who, by his death.

hath destroyed death, and by his rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life." And then we shall finally be admitted to that festival in the Church triumphant, in which we shall unite in the everlasting ascription of praise that ascends from the myriads of the heavenly host—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

^r Communion Office.

SERMON XX.

THE HOLY GHOST-HIS NATURE AND OFFICES.

[WHIT-SUNDAY.]

Acts ii. 4.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

This is the record of the event which took place on that memorable day, when the Apostles gathered together in one place, experienced the accomplishment of the promise of their Master, and were "endued with power from on high "." The promised Comforter was sent—The Spirit of truth descended. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

But not to the Apostles only is this declaration applicable. The Spirit which then descended upon the Church, was to abide with it for ever; amimating its faithful members to the end of the world. "Know ye not," saith the Apostle, ad-

dressing Christians, "that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you"." "Ye are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit"." "Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost"." It must now then be the characteristic of all sincere Christians, that they are "filled with the Holy Ghost."

I. The nature of the Holy Ghost,

II. His offices,

III. The mode of his operations—and

IV. The means of their conveyance,

Shall be considered in the following discourse, and will embrace all the particulars that relate to this important doctrine.

My brethren, this subject, transcending the comprehension of the human mind, is to be approached and to be discussed with the deepest reverence. Human reason has no farther concern with it, than to ascertain and to illustrate what may be revealed in regard to it. The Divine essence cannot be reduced to the comprehension of the most perfect created intelligence; and, therefore, it can be no valid objection to any truth relative to the Divine nature, that it is incomprehensible.

Let us then proceed to consider the truths

d 1 Cor. iii. 17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16.

relative to the Holy Spirit, as matters purely of revelation; to be received by us as they are revealed. Contradictory to our reason, we cannot pronounce them, on this very account, that they transcend her comprehension. Reason is a judge only of those things that he within the range of her powers. In regard to the Divine nature, she must be guided and determined only by the illuminations of the word of God.

- I. The nature of the Holy Spirit.
- 1. He is a person.
- 2. He is a Divine person.
- 3. He proceeds from the Futher and the Son.
- 1. He is a person. He possesses that distinct subsistence and agency which constitute the idea of a person. He is not, as is asserted by those who deny the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the mere efficacy or power of the Father. For he is distinct from the Father and the Son. That must be a person to which personal titles, personal attributes, and personal acts are assigned. Mark the numerous passages of Scripture, in which all these are ascribed to the Holy Ghost. Personal titles—He is styled "the Holy Ghost" in that same declaration which bestows their personal titles on the Father and the Son.—"Go ye and teach all nations, bap-

tizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Our Saviour styles him "the Spirit of truth, the Comforter." In numerous places of Scripture he is styled "the Spirit," "the Holy Spirit," "the Holy Ghost." If he be not a person, can we conceive any reason why personal titles should thus be ascribed to him?

If he be not a person, we also ask, why should personal attributes and operations be assigned him. Hear him styled "the Holy Spirith," the eternal Spirith. Hear our Saviour declaring, that he whom he denominates the Spirit of truth, shall "teach, shall lead into all truth," "shall bring all things to remembrance," "shall testify concerning him," "shall shew things to come "." What a singular, what an unauthorized, may we not say, what a deceptive mode of expression, if the Holy Ghost be the mere efficacy and power of the Father, and not a person?

2. But we proceed further and say—The Holy Ghost is not only a person, but a *Divine* person.

Would a creature be ranked with the Father

Matt. xxviii. 19.
 John xiv. 16, 17. 26.
 John iii. 6. Eph. iv. 30. John xiv. 26.
 Eph. iv. 30.
 Heb. ix. 14.
 John xiv. 17, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 13.

and the Son in that title of the Godhead into which Christians are baptized? Would a created being be designated by the incommunicable attributes of God? The Spirit is emphatically styled "holy,"—and yet there is none holy but the Lord. He is said to be the Author and Giver of life. He is styled "the Spirit of truth "-IIe is omniscient—for he foresees all things, and revealed to the Prophets future events, being styled "the Spirit of Prophecy";" and he "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God "." He is independent in his operations. For he "divideth to every man severally as he will "." He is eternal—for the Apostle styles him "the eternal Spirit "." Divine acts are ascribed to him. As the "Creator Spirit" he moved on the face of the waters; and by his creating energy, from that chaos which was without form and void, arose a world of order and of beauty. As the Ruler of nature, he controls its powers, for it was "the Spirit that raised up Jesus from the dead q," and by the miraculous gifts which he poured on the Apostles, all nature became obedient to their will. The Creator and Governor of the world, he is the Instructor and Ruler of the Church. As "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, as the Spirit of counsel and might, as the Spirit of

¹ John xvi. 13. ¹¹ Rev. xix. 10. ¹² 1 Cor. ii. 10. ¹³ 1 Cor. iii. 11. ¹⁴ Rom. viii. 11. ¹⁵ Rom. viii. 11.

knowledge and of the fear of the Lord r," he rested without measure on the Divine teacher Jesus Christ, and declared through the Apostles the law of evangelical righteousness. "By him the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified "."

My brethren—consider all these things—that the Holy Gholy is ranked in the title of the Godhead, with the Father and the Son—that divine attributes are ascribed to him, and divine operations assigned him. Would it not be blasphemy to regard him only as a creature, as less than God? Lying unto the Holy Ghost, a crime for which death struck Ananias, is, in the emphatic language of the Apostle—"Lying unto God"."

3. With regard to the nature of the Holy Ghost, we remark further, that he is the third in order of the persons of the Godhead, and that he proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is repeatedly styled "the Spirit of the Father," and as repeatedly denominated "the Spirit of the Son"." And, therefore in the Litany, we worship him as "God the Holy Ghost proceeding from the Father and the Son." The mode of this procession is involved in that darkness which conceals from finite eye the inscrutable nature of the Godhead. The subsistence of three persons in

^{&#}x27;Isaiah xi. 2, 3.

^{*} Collect of the Liturgy.

^t Acts v. 3, 4.

[&]quot; John xv. 26. Gal. iv. 16.

one Divine essence, is a truth which the most vigorous intellect cannot comprehend. But let us beware, lest, because it is incomprehensible, we reject it. Can we comprehend the existence of one living and true God; a cause of all things, himself without cause; a being to whose presence and existence there are no limits of time or space? Can we comprehend our own existence, our own nature? Can we remove the veil that covers the world around us, penetrate into its hidden recesses, and bring forth the causes and essences of things? Surely, until we can comprehend our own nature, and the nature of the objects around us, we ought not to presume to sit in judgment on the Divine nature, and on the things of the spiritual world.

From the nature of the Holy Ghost, we proceed to the consideration of

II. His Offices.

By the particular agency of the Holy Spirit, is the dispensation of grace and mercy conducted. All the persons of the adorable Trinity are indeed concerned in the work of man's redemption. This dispensation originated in the infinite wisdom and love of God the *Father*. It was established by the sufferings and death of the *Son* of God; who as the head of this gracious dispensation, still conducts it by the instrumentality of the

Holy Spirit, by whose operations it is perpetuated. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, the Saviour of that body, to which he dispenses truth, grace and salvation, and which he governs and renews by the agency of the Holy Ghost.

In this divine work, the offices of the Holy Spirit may be considered as,

1. Extraordinary; 2. Ecclesiastical; and 3. Ordinary.

1. His extraordinary offices, are those which relate to the promulgation of the will of God; and to its establishment in the world.

It was promulgated and established by that inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which filled with supernatural light and wisdom patriarchs and prophets; which rested without measure on Jesus the anointed of the Father; and by which the Apostles were guided into all truth.

The Holy Ghost directed and illumined Patriarchs and Prophets.

When holy men spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; when Noah proclaimed the lessons and the warnings of righteousness to an ungodly world; when Jacob predicted the kingdom of Christ in the coming of that Shiloh to whom the gathering of

the people should be'; when David spake of his Lord as sitting on the right hand of the Lord Jehovah'; when in those strains which are still the instruction and the joy of the Church, he set forth the benign character, the gracious offices, and the illustrious kingdom of the Prince of Righteousness and Peace; when the Prophets, whom God sent to denounce woe or to proclaim salvation to his people Israel, announced the Messiah and his kingdom with a minuteness and a force of description, with a sublimity and feryour of language that still enlighten and warm even those who behold the gracious predictions fulfilled; when thus Patriarchs and Kings and Prophets laid open the tract of future ages; described the Deliverer, who, coming from heaven, should redeem the world; denounced the wrath, or in strains of comfort proclaimed the mercy of Jehovah, the Maker and Ruler of heaven and of earth; promulgated his truth, revealed his will, and established his laws--they "all spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"." The fire within them was kindled by the Divine Spirit; their hearts were touched with a living coal from his altar; and under his inspiration and guidance they spake with their tongues.

Gen. xlix. 10. Ps. cx. 1. 2 Peter i. 21.

The extraordinary power of the Divine Spirit rested on Jesus Christ.

When He who partook of the fulness of the Godhead, came as the Son of man to reveal his Father's will, to "bring in everlasting righteousness," to " preach good tidings to the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God;" to " lead captivity captive, and to give gifts unto men ';" he "spake as never man spake";" he performed works which never man had done; because the Spirit rested on him, in his human nature, "without measure"." He was "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power a;" and therefore "full of grace were his lips;" his doctrine dropped as the rain, his speech distilled as the dew; he spake, and the eyes of the blind were opened, and the tongue of the dumb loosed; he commanded, and the waves of the sea were calmed, the tenant of the tomb burst the barriers of death.

The Holy Ghost guided the Apostles by his extraordinary gifts.

<sup>Isaiah lxi. 1. Eph. iv. 8.
John vii. 46.
Acts x. 38.</sup>

The Apostles, illiterate men, "declared in the tongues of every nation, the wonderful works of God b." They, whose means of information extended not beyond the humble sphere of fishermen, became acquainted with all mysteries and all knowledge. They, who had no friend but a crucified malefactor, and whose enemies were as implacable in their malice as they were mighty in their power; against whom were arrayed the prejudices of the Jew, the corrupt worldly wisdom of the Gentile, the riches of the great, the power of the kingdoms of the earth, the arts and malice of the hosts of darkness, and the passions of the human heart; the Apostles, ignorant, friendless, despised, became the spiritual conquerors of the world! Their victory was the victory of truth over error, of holiness over vice; and was mighty to the pulling down of the "imaginations of the heart, and of every thing that exalteth itself against God "."

And it was achieved by the power of the Divine Spirit. On the day of Pentecost "they were filled with the Holy Ghost." The Spirit of truth whom their Master promised, was sent. "They were endued with power from on high"—and the mighty works which they performed, the world could not gainsay nor resist. The reign of truth and salvation which they pro-

^b Acts ii. 11.

claimed, was *established* in the world, by the intraculous or extraordinary agency of the Divine Spirit.

2. It has been perpetuated by that *ccclesi-astical* gift of the Holy Spirit, by which men are empowered to minister in holy things, to preach the word, to administer the Sacraments, and to govern that spiritual society over which "the Holy Ghost makes them overseers d."

This ecclesiastical gift is not the gift of holiness—but the gift of office—of the power to exercise that ministry which " no man taketh unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron " by an external commission. This commission is conveyed by the laying on of the hands of those who in succession have derived authority for the purpose from the Apostles; and it is conferred in the words by which it was originally given, and which designate the Holy Ghost as the author of it. "Receive the Holy Ghost " is the original commission, and in the same words this commission is still conveyed in the offices of ordination used by our Churchthat is, receive that power to minister in holy things which the Holy Ghost only confers.

The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost

d Acts xx. 28. Heb. v. 4. John xx. 22.

were confined to the Apostolic age. The ecclesiastical gift of the Holy Spirit belongs only to those to whom are committed the preaching of the word, the exercise of discipline, and the administration of the sacraments. To claim the extraordinary influences and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without affording the evidence of his extraordinary presence by the exercise of miraculous gifts, would be impiety of the highest grade. To assume the exercise of the ecclesiastical gift of the Holy Ghost, without having duly and regularly received it, must surely be no venial fault. To use the words of an eloquent and pious prelate*, it is "a crime for which the leprosy once rose up in the forehead of a monarch, and Corah and all his company (holy as they said they all were) went down alive into the pit."

But though, in the present day, no Christians possess the extraordinary influences of the Divine Spirit; and his ecclesiastical gifts, or the external commission to the ministry, are confined to a particular order of men; yet to his

3. Ordinary influences,

All Christians may lay claim. The ordinary or common influences of the Holy Spirit, of

[&]quot; Bishop Horne.

which all Christians partake, are those by which he enlightens their minds; sanctifies their wills, renews their affections; governs and directs their actions; and quickens, consoles, and preserves them in the spiritual life.

Behold the understanding which, by nature is darkened and indisposed to the reception of Divine truth, assenting to those doctrines of grace and salvation which to the carnal man are foolishness, and deeming them more glorious and of infinitely more value than all the treasures of human science. Behold the will, which by nature is perverse and corrupt, inclined to evil and averse to good, made obedient unto the truth, and delighting to follow the law of God. Behold the affections, which by nature are enslaved to the things of the flesh, sensual, irregular, and violent, become tractable, orderly, pure, spiritual, fixed on God, devoted to his service, seeking heaven and heavenly things. Behold the man who was once "dead in trespasses and sins," " walking after the course of this world, fulfilling only the lusts of his flesh and of his corrupt mind "," practically without God, glorving in his shame; quickened to a spiritual life, renouncing his sins, and turning to God. He exchanges his covetousness for liberality, his injustice for honesty, his intemperance for sobriety,

his lust for purity, his pride for meekness, his profanity for piety, his sensuality for heavenlymindedness-his devotion to the world for devotedness to God-his grovelling on the earth for aspiring after the fellowship of God. Behold him under provocations possessing his soul in patience, in persecution returning good for evil, in tribulation rejoicing, in the midst of the world and of its highest enjoyments dwelling in heaven. Whence this illumination of the darkened understanding, this renewal of the perverse will, this sanctification of the depraved affections, this direction and subservience of the whole life to the works of God's laws and the ways of his commandments, this comfortable sense of adoption by God, this superiority to the world, this dwelling in heaven? Whence this most wonderful transformation, this victory more arduous and glorious than that by which a world is conquered?

From no human origin, from no human strength—From the Spirit of God—From his illuminating, renewing, sanctifying, governing, consoling agency. Spirit of the Father and of the Son! thou doest all these things.

From these offices of the Divine Spirit, I proceed to consider

- III. The mode of his operations.
- 1. They are incomprehensible.
- "The wind bloweth where it listeth," saith

our Saviour, "and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor
whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of
the Spirith." The agency of the natural element
of the air is unknown to us. Equally incomprehensible are the operations of the Divine Spirit.
In what mode he enlightens our understandings,
without overwhelming them by his powerful influences; rectifies our wills without destroying
their free agency, and purifies our affections,
without changing their nature—are points which
are wholly unknown to us.

But, because we cannot comprehend the mode, shall we doubt the reality of his operations? Mark to what results this principle would lead us. We cannot comprehend the being of a God—we must, therefore, doubt his existence. We cannot comprehend the nature of his Providence—we must, therefore, doubt its superintending agency. We cannot comprehend the nature of the human soul—we must, therefore, doubt its existence. We cannot comprehend the nature of the union between the soul and the body, and the mode by which the one operates upon the other—we must, therefore, doubt the union of the soul with the body, and their mutual relation and influence. In

^h John iii. 8.

fine, my brethren, this principle of disbelieving every thing which we cannot comprehend, would not leave us any thing on which we could fix our faith. The operation of the Divine Spirit on our minds is possible. Our weakness and corruption, and the salutary effects of his influences in enlightening, sanctifying, and consoling us, render these influences desirable. We are assured of the fact, that they are vouchsafed to us-that the Divine Spirit enlightens, sanctifies, and consoles us. It is not necessary that we should know more. Our Divine Guide, Sanctifier, and Comforter, is present with us. Of this we are assured by the testimony of God himself. Let us not display the most arrogant folly in rejecting the salutary presence of the Spirit of God, because we cannot comprehend the mode of his gracious operations.

2. The operations of the Divine Spirit may be resisted.

The Holy Spirit, in his influences on our minds, interferes not with their free agency. And of course, it is in our power to resist, and finally to quench his gracious operations. See that "ye receive not the grace of God in vain'." Quench not the Spirit', are exhortations

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 1.

k 1 Thess. v. 19.

which suppose what consciousness teaches every man, that his mind is free in all its acts; and that it is in his power to resist and to defeat those divine influences by which the Holy Ghost quickens and animates the spiritual life. The nature of these influences on the powers of the human soul is well set forth by our Church in her Articles and Liturgy. The Divine Spirit is represented as the primary agent in our sanctification, as "putting into our minds good desires, inspiring us to think that which is good, enabling us to bring our good thoughts and desires to good effect, thus working in us a good will, and enabling us to do that which is good." But still it is by his "guiding," by his "help," by "his working with us," not by his overpowering and resistless agency, by his sole operations, that we are to "keep his commandments, and to please him both in will and deed;" that we are to "purify ourselves as he is pure," and "continually to be given to all good works * ."

3. The operations of the Divine Spirit are not to be distinguished from the operations of our own minds.

^{*} Article X. Collect for Easter. Ditto for fifth Sunday after Laster. Ditto for first Sunday after Trinity. Ditto for sixth Sunday after the Epiphany. Ditto for seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

The reason of this is obvious. The Divine Spirit calls into action only the powers of our minds. He calls into action no new faculties. He only restores those which we already possess to their primitive vigour, and directs them to their proper objects. He illumines our understandings so that they discern and receive spiritual truth. He rectifies our wills, so that they obediently choose the things which God commandeth, and follow after that which he does promise. He purifies and enlivens our affections, so that we love, desire, hope for the service and the enjoyment of God. In our own minds we perceive only the exercise of our natural powers. But still the experience of our weakness and corruption, as well as the testimony of God's word, lead us to believe that there is an higher, a Divine agency within us, which "works in us both to will and to do 1."

4. It is also a characteristic of the operations of the Divine Spirit, that they are known only by their fruits.

As they are not to be distinguished from the operations of our own minds; they are to be known only by their effects. There are no declarations of Scripture which countenance the idea that the sanctifying presence of the Divine Spirit in our souls, is to be inferred from any

[!] Philip. ii. 13.

thing but his holy fruits. What saith the Scriptures, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God ":" "If a man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his "." "Ye shall know them by their fruits "." The Spirit of God is an holy sanctifying principle. The certain, the only evidence of his gracious influences is the holy fruit which he produces, holy affections and a holy life. He who indulges (I speak not of the infirmities of our nature) in pride, in malice, in dishonesty, in covetousness, in intemperance, in sensuality, in any of the sinful lusts of the flesh, and yet pretends that he is the subject of the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit, is possessed by the spirit of delusion; the spirit that will delude him to perdition.

But though we cannot ascertain the mode by which the Divine Spirit operates on our minds, we are in no doubt as to the

IV. Means by which we can obtain his gracious influences. The consideration of these completes the view of our subject.

As far as the influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary to enable men to do acceptably the will of God, and to work out their salvation, they are conferred on all men. "The grace of

^m Rom. viii. 14. ⁿ Rom. viii. 9. ^o Matt. vii. 16.

God, bringing salvation to all men, hath appeared "." But where the Gospel is revealed, in order to the exercise of a living faith, to the production of all good works, to the complete renovation and sanctification of the soul, the peculiar influences of the Divine Spirit are necessary. These are to be obtained by union with the Church, which, as "his body "," Christ animates with his Spirit. Accordingly in the sacrament of Baptism, which unites us to his Church, we become entitled to the influences of the Holy Spirit, as the agent of our spiritual life. In the ordinance of Confirmation, worthily received, he shedson us his renewing and strengthening power, his manifold gifts of grace. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he refreshes and strengthens the soul of the penitent believer by still further supplies of his sanctifying and consoling power. In the ministration of the word, and in the worship of the sanctuary, he often descends with his invigorating and purifying graces into the souls of the faithful. And in their private and fervent supplications at the throne of grace, they experience the truth of the declaration, that "God will give his Spirit to those who ask him "." How numerous are the means by which we may obtain the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit of God !

Behold now, my brethren, the truths which have been elucidated, and which seem to comprise every thing which relates to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

As to his nature—he is a Person; a Divine person; and he proceeds from the Father and the Son.

His offices are extraordinary; those gifts which were peculiar to the Apostles, and by which the Church was established—ecclesiastical; those by which the ministry of his Church is perpetuated—and ordinary; those by which all Christians are enlightened, sanctified, governed, protected and consoled.

His operations, though real and salutary, are incomprehensible; they may be resisted; they are not to be distinguished from the operations of our own minds; they are to be known only by the fruits which they produce.

We derive them by our union with the Church in Baptism; by the ordinance of Confirmation; by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; by the ministrations of the word and by the worship of the sanctuary; and by private prayer.

Brethren—the Holy Ghost is a Divine Person, and exercises towards us the most important offices. He demands our homage. It is not sufficient that we adore God the Father, who made us; and when we had fallen from his

favour, in infinite wisdom and goodness, devised a plan for our recovery, and laid help on one that is mighty. It is not sufficient that we adore God the Son, who in our nature, which he assumed, effected by his sufferings and death, our redemption from sin; by his resurrection, our deliverance from the power of the grave; and who having ascended into heaven, still lives in power and glory to intercede for us and to bless us. We must humbly adore God the Holy Ghost, to whom the execution of the plan of salvation is now committed by the Father and the Son; and who in the discharge of his gracious office, having established the Church by the effusion of his miraculous gifts, and provided for its continuance by the permanent gift of office to its ministers, enlightens, sanctifies and consoles its members. In the deepest reverence and humility, let us adore and supplicate him-"O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners."

Brethren—this Divine Spirit is the fountain of every grace, the author of every good and perfect gift. In darkness he is a Spirit to illumine; in doubt to cheer; in adversity to comfort; in temptation to strengthen; in sin to sanctify; over the world, and over death to give us the victory. Let us then devoutly seek his influences in the ordinances of the Church; and in fervent prayer. But let us not mistake the glow of animal feeling,

or the fires of a heated imagination for the mild and purifying influences of the Spirit of God. The pledge of his power in our souls must be found only in the victories which he there achieves; in the detestation of sin, in the resistance to its temptations, in the holy desires and resolutions, in the graces and the virtues which he there excites and establishes. It is your duty to watch, to labour, to strive in your Christian course, as if your salvation depended only on yourselves: and yet you must not for a moment forget, that without the Spirit of God you can do nothing; that by him you are sanctified and saved; and therefore on him you must depend; and him you must invoke for strength, for deliverance, for victory.

Sinners, you who are "tied and fast bound by the chain of your sins," we direct to the Spirit of God. Your thraldom is grievous—grievous as the bands of death; and unless you are released from it, it will be lasting and grievous as the pains of hell. The Spirit of God only can break your chains. Supplicate his power; and to your prayers add diligence, watchfulness, resolution. You shall be restored "from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Christian! whatever be thy state; depressed by doubts, or cheered by the lights of faith; plunged in the depths of adversity, or elevated on the mountain of the Lord; assailed by temptation, or reposing in the triumphs of victory; drawing near the close of thy pilgrimage, or just entering on its course; secure by prayer, and by the devout use of all the means of grace, the influences of the Spirit of God. He will cheer thee in doubt; he will comfort thee in faith; he will console thee in adversity; he will guard thee in prosperity; he will strengthen thee against temptation; he will secure to thee thy spiritual triumphs; he will guide thee on thy pilgrimage; and conduct thee to its close. Through the vale of death he will enlighten thee—In the courts of heaven he will seat thee for ever.

Now then, to this Divine guide, sanctifier and comforter—the Holy Ghost, with the Father and the Son—three persons and one God, be ascribed all power, majesty, dominion and praise, for ever and ever.

SERMON XXI.

THE PROCESS OF SALVATION BY THE LORD JESUS AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

1 Cor. vi. 11.

But ye are washed, 'ut ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

THE Christian religion is not more wonderful in its doctrines, its aids, and its sanctions, than in the moral change which it is capable of effecting in degenerate man. This change is wrought by the application of its doctrines, its precepts, and its sanctions, through the power of the Holy Ghost, to the understanding and the heart.

In what state did the Gospel find mankind? The pen of an inspired historian has drawn the melancholy picture—"They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters,

inventers of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners a." From this bondage of sin, and from the awful condemnation which was the consequence of it, the Gospel of Christ delivered those who believed in his name. They were "washed, they were sanctified, they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

But, my brethren—these actual sins which marked the state of the Heathen world at the coming of Christ, were the result as they are the evidence of that fallen and corrupt nature to which we are heirs—of that evil "infection," tainting our souls, and figuratively denominated the "flesh;" subject to which, as we all are by our natural condition, "we cannot please God, but live in sin, committing many actual transgressions." It becomes therefore a most serious inquiry how we may be washed, sanctified, and justified; and thus be "born again and made heirs of everlasting salvation *."

The "Lord Jesus," and the "Spirit of God" are the agents in this process of our salvation.

^a Rom. i. 29. &c. &c.

See the Ninth Article of the Church, and the Office of Baptism for those of riper years.

"Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

I. It is said of professing Christians, that they are "washed."

The term evidently applies to baptism. In this sacrament, washing or sprinkling with water, which is the external sign, denotes the purification of the soul from sin by the influences of the Divine Spirit. This symbolical rite implies that all who are by it admitted into the Church, receive a title on the condition of their repentance, their faith, and obedience, to deliverance both from the guilt and dominion of sin; and to purification from all the corruptions of their fallen nature; and they are henceforth bound to serve God in "newness of life." This is the import of the sacramental rite of baptism, the "washing" to which the Apostle refers. Baptism indeed does not prove to all Christians the "mean and pledge" of this "inward and spiritual grace." But this is not owing to any deficiency in the divinely instituted rite, but to the want of the necessary qualifications in the recipients. All who are baptized, professing sincerely, through the "preventing" grace of God *, repentance, faith,

^{* &}quot;Preventing" grace denotes the grace which "goes before" every good desire and every good principle, exciting and bring-

and obedience, are "washed" from their sins. The guilt of their transgressions is not imputed to them; and they receive the Divine Spirit by whose agency they may be redeemed from the power of their original corruption. "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins b," was the language of the Apostles. We are "saved by the washing of regeneration "."

It being the command of Christ that little children should be brought unto him, declaring that "of such is the kingdom of God d," we offer them unto him in baptism. And in the case of infants "water is sanctified to the mystical washing away of sin *"—that is, baptism is the mean by which their sinful nature is restored to favour, and by which they are placed in a "state of salvation;" in which fulfilling, "when they come to age," the promises of baptism, they secure the privileges of the Christian covenant.

Even those who receive the external washing of baptism, while they are destitute of those internal qualifications which alone can render it effectual, may still be said, in a certain sense, to be "washed" from their sins. For they have

ing them into action. Thus in the Collect for Easter, "as by thy special grace preventing" (going before or directing) us, "thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help, we may bring the same to good effect."

b Acts xxii. 16. c Titus iii. 5. d Mark x. 14.

^{*} Office of Baptism of Infants.

received in baptism the proffer of that internal purification which the external washing denoted: of the forgiveness of sin, and of release from its dominion; and they become solemnly bound to live a new and holy life. Thus, though not actually they are sacramentally "washed" from sin. In this sense then, as brought into a new state m which they receive what they have no right to by nature, a title to the forgiveness of their sins, and to the influences of the Divine Spirit, baptized persons are considered by our Church as "regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost, and having received the forgiveness of their sins *." But it is of the utmost importance to distinguish between the regeneration of baptism and that renewing of the Holy Ghost," that "renewing of the mind," of which all baptized persons must be the subjects, in order finally to entitle them to the privileges of their baptism. Without this renewal and sanctification by the Divine Spirit, their baptismal privileges will only increase their condemnation.

Professing Christians—do you often reflect that in baptism you were thus "washed"—that in this holy sacrament, deliverance from the condemnation and dominion of sin was solemnly proffered to you by your God and Saviour? Surely this is a privilege the most inestimable which you can enjoy. What but sin degrades your nature, destroys your peace, and disquali-

^{*} Offices of Baptism of Adults and Confirmation.

fies you for heaven? Have you then been impressed with a sense of your unhappy subjection to it, and earnestly sought deliverance through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost from its guilt and dominion? And have you thus endeavoured to secure the privileges of your baptism by "the death unto sin and the new birth unto righteousness" to which it pledged you? Then it may be truly said of you, that you are not only sacramentally but actually "washed" from your sins. Their guilt does not defile your conscience; their dominion does not corrupt your soul; nor will they appear against you at the bar of judgment.

But, if they who were sacramentally washed, who received in baptism the offer of spiritual purification, disregard the inestimable blessing. and neglect to fulfil the conditions on which it is suspended, how shall they escape the condemnation of Him whose mercy and grace they thus despise. Bound by the obligations of baptism to depart from iniquity, and to be holy in their life and conversation, to exhibit the purity and righteousness of those who were washed from their sins, how aggravated is their guilt, when they yield themselves the servants of unrighteousness.

II. But Christians are also said in the text to be " sanctified by the Spirit of God."

By nature man is corrupt—prone to evil—exposed to the temptations of the world. To renew and to redeem him, to sanctify him in soul and body, to separate him from all sin, and to make him holy unto the Lord is the gracious design of the Gospel dispensation. To effect these objects, the Spirit of God, the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, becomes the Sanctifier of fallen man.

So deplorable, indeed, was his degeneracy, that it was necessary almighty power should interpose to save him, and to restore his corrupt soul to holiness. God, as our Sovereign and Judge, possesses the right to prescribe both the mode and the conditions of our salvation. He sent his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, to make that atonement for sin which the honour of his government and the claims of his justice exacted. What is our duty? Instead of presumptuously inquiring why a propitiation should be necessary, and why the blood of Christ shed upon the cross should be accepted as a propitiation, it becomes us with deep humility and lively gratitude to embrace that atonement by which our sins are pardoned, and our peace made with an offended God. It has pleased also the everlasting Jehovah to send to us the Holy Ghost to redeem us from sin, to lead us into truth, to sanctify and renew us, to make us holy in soul and body. This Holy Spirit, the third person in the adorable Trinity, proceeding

from the Father and the Son, is the Sanctifier and Comforter of fallen man. We cannot, indeed, comprehend the mode by which the Holy Ghost partakes of the Divine nature of the Godhead, nor the manner by which he operates upon our own minds. But, surely it is our duty in humility and gratitude, to cherish those influences of the Holy Spirit by which we shall be led into truth, established in holiness, and prepared for heaven.

This Holy Spirit is, in a certain sense, the agent of sanctification in every man. In order to vindicate the justice and goodness of God, it it necessary for us to believe what indeed the Scriptures inculcate, that "Jesus Christ made a propitiation for the sins of the whole world e;" and hath thus put all men in a salvable state, and enabled them through the grace of the Holy Spirit, to work out their salvation. In a certain sense, then, all men are "sanctified by the Spirit of God;" inasmuch as they partake of such a portion of his gracious influences as enables them to serve God. according to the proportion of light which they have received, and where the Gospel is revealed, to believe and to obey it.

But, in a peculiar manner, it may be said of all Christians, that they are "sanctified by the Spirit of God." They partake not only of that measure of his grace which is common to all men, but of that more extraordinary portion as-

^{. 1} John ii. 2.

signed to the Church, the body of Christ. Christ. hath sanctified the Church which is his body. and dwells in it by the influences of his Holy Spirit'. To those, then, who are admitted into this body by baptism, and who thus become the called, the elect of God, a more extraordinary measure of the grace of the Holy Spirit is dispensed than to the rest of the world. Baptized Christians are said in Scripture to be "the temples of the Holy Ghost "." He dwells in them, their Guide, Sanctifier, and Comforter. Their understandings darkened-this Divine Guide is ready to enlighten them; to open to them the glorious truths of the Gospel; to lead them to discern the excellence of the plan of salvation, the goodness and love of God as displayed in this wonderful mystery, and the mercy and grace of their Saviour. Their spirits depressed within them while they sojourn in this vale of tears-this blessed Comforter is ready to console them; to revive their drooping spirits; to "shed abroad in their hearts the love of God h;" and to point their hopes to the joys and glories of their heavenly inheritance. Their souls, subject to vicious propensities and passions, averse to good, and prone to evil-this Divine Sanctifier is ready to renew and restore them; to establish in them all holy graces; and to form their hearts to the love of God, to the pursuit of truth, and to the practice of virtue. All

Feph. v. 25, &c. F1 Cor. iii. 16. Rom. v. 5.

Christians are thus "sanctified by the Spirit of God." They possess this Spirit as the agent of their sanctification.

But though the Holy Spirit is thus present in the souls of all Christians, there are many who neglect or resist his gracious influences. In them the Spirit produces none of his sanctifying fruits. They might enjoy his illuminating light; but they prefer the darkness of error. He seeks to restore them by his power to the glorious liberty of the sons of God; they remain in the bondage of corruption. He seeks to reinstate them in the image of God; they choose the service of sin and Satan.

In those however who cherish the gracious influences of the Spirit of God, he produces his sanctifying fruits. Through his power, they became not only sacramentally, but really and fully the subjects of that "death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness," which baptism denoted and enforced. All "sinful affections die in them, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in them *." They crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. They mortify their sinful and corrupt affections. They are transformed by the renewing of their mind. They grow in grace, in love to God, in benevolence to mankind, in the careful government of their passions, and in the knowledge and service of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

They are in the highest sense sanctified by the Spirit of God. And they advance "from strength to strength, until they appear before God in the heavenly Zion."

Brethren, ask your own hearts—the inquiry is infinitely important—to which of these classes of professing Christians do you belong? Are you of the number of those who neglect and resist the Spirit of God; who have never experienced his holy influences in that new birth, in which he raises "from the death of sin to the life of righteousness;" and who are yet enslaved by your sins, and devoted to the gratification of your passions? Or are you of the number of those who have cherished the blessed influences of the Divine Spirit of God, and through his power are daily advancing in the great Christian work of "crucifying the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts. and of putting on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness ?" Among one of these two classes ye must rank. Consider, I beseech you, how great must be the guilt of those who do despite unto the Spirit of grace. Remember—the Almighty hath said— "My Spirit shall not always strive with man 1."-Beware, lest by your sins and your neglect of his proffered grace, ye provoke him to take his Holy Spirit from you; to give you up to "eat of the

ⁱ Eph. iv. 24.

fruit of your own way, and to be filled with your own devices "—to "swear in his wrath that ye shall not enter into his rest "."

III. Lastly,—It is said of Christians, in the text, that they are "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus."

"All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God "." And, through sin, they are obnoxious to his displeasure, and in a state of condemnation. When they are translated from this state and received into favour with God, they are said to be justified. The "name" or the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ are the only meritorious cause of our justification. "There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ "." "By him all that believe are justified from all things "." "We are justified by his blood ?." And again, in the words of the text—" we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." Thus it pleased the Sovereign of the Universe to establish the plan of salvation for fallen man. He hath set forth his Son to be a "propitiation for the sins of the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life"." Jesus Christ alone

Prov. i. 31. ^m Psalm xev. 11. ⁿ Rom. iii. 23. ⁿ Acts iv. 12. P Acts xiii. 39. ⁿ Rom. v. 9. ^r John iii. 15.

hath made that all-perfect atonement for sm which Divine justice exacted. He alone, by his perfect obedience, hath vindicated the Divine law; purchased for us the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit; and opened to us the kingdom of heaven. His righteousness, therefore, can be the only meritorious cause of our justification, of our acceptance with God. But these merits of Christ, which alone are available to justification, are applied only to those who perform certain conditions. What is the uniform language of Scripture-repent and believe and obey the Gospel. And this obedience embraces not only all the moral precepts of the Gospel; but its positive injunctions—baptism, and the "laying on of hands," and the Lord's Supper, and all the other ordinances of the Church and means of grace. Still, the rightcourness of Christ is the only meritorious cause of our justification. No works of our own independently of these merits, would have procured the pardon of our sins, and our admission to heaven; and these merits are received and embraced through faith. It is often, therefore, said in the language of Scripture, and of the Church, that we are "justified by faith only."

When persons who have never been within the pale of the Christian covenant, profess their faith in Jesus Christ, as the only Mediator between God and man, and are admitted by

baptism into the Church; they are put into a justified state, or, "into a state of salvation *" that is—into a state in which they have a conditional title to the blessings of salvation. And if their faith be sincere, they are actually justified, and accounted righteous before God. In the same state of actual justification are infants who are baptized. They are "washed" from the stains of original sin, so that it is not imputed to them; they are entitled to all the privileges of the Christian covenant.

Our first justification, therefore, it is apparent, is by faith only, strictly speaking. For the sincere profession of faith by adults in their own persons, and the implied profession of faith in infants, who are incapable of an actual profession, puts them into a justified state. But on baptized persons, who are thus justified, the command is enjoined—"they who believe in God must be careful to maintain good works "." Baptized persons in order to preserve their first or baptismal justification, must be "transformed by the renewing of their minds'," sanctified by the Spirit of God, and be diligent in their endeavours to fulfil their baptismal engagements; to die unto sin and to rise unto righteousness; to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; to live righteously, soberly and godly in the world. But when they fall into sin (and

^{*} Catechism of the Church. Titus iii. 8. Rom. xii. 2.

"there is no man that liveth and sinneth not"," in order to their justification, they must repent them truly of their sins, and, through the grace of God, confess and renounce them. To that justification, therefore, which is subsequent to their baptismal justification, repentance, or the confession and renunciation of their sins, accompanied by renewed faith in Christ, is an indispensible condition. Yet even in this justification, in as much as repentance, which is the condition of it, is rendered available only by the merits of Christ received by faith, it may still be said in this sense, that they are "justified by faith only."

At the final day of retribution, the standard by which Christians will be tried, and will be justified or condemned, will be "the things done in the body"." To their final justification, therefore, works wrought through faith and by the aids of Divine grace, will be deemed indispensible. At this day by their works they shall be justified, and by their works they shall be condemned. But the good works which even the most perfect Christian has performed, are rendered acceptable and available to his final justification, only through the merits of Christ received by faith. It may, therefore, be said in this sense, that even at the final day of retribution, Christians are "justified by faith only."

You see then, brethren, that justification by

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faith only, in its correct sense, means that the merits of Christ received by faith, are the only meritorious cause of our justification; while repentance and good works, wrought through faith, and by the influences of the Divine Spirit, are conditions equally indispensible.

Great therefore is the error of those who insist on the doctrine of justification by faith only, in any sense which excludes the necessity of good works, as the indispensible conditions of salvation—who represent faith, not as the condition of salvation, but as the instrument by which the elect are inseparably united to Christ, and assured of their salvation. On their principles, it will be impossible consistently to maintain the necessity of good works; and the Antinomian doctrine. that since believers are saved only by faith in Christ, they are absolved from their obligation to the moral law, appears reasonable and correct.

In the important inquiry, brethren, whether ye are in a justified state, discard this dangerous doctrine. Cherish, indeed, as the only ground of your hopes, the merits and atonement of Jesus Christ; and by faith rely on these merits. But remember, that they are available to those only, who through faith abound in good works, who "add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity."

My brethren, the mode by which they, to whom the Gospel is prociaimed, must be saved is established in the text. They must receive the sacramental washing of baptism—they must be sanctified by the Spirit of God—by the merits of Christ received by faith, they are justified.

To every individual here present, the inquiries are infinitely important.—In the layer of regeneration, the sacrament of baptism, have ye symbolically been "washed" from your sins, receiving a title to that Divine Spirit, by which you may be cleansed from all iniquity, and serve God in newness of life? Have ye thus been purified and "sanctified by the Spirit of God"-sanctified in soul and body, redeemed from sin and established in holiness? Have ye acknowledged your baptismal engagements, and sought the manifold gifts of the blessed Comforter in "the laying on of hands?" Do you devoutly participate of that Holy Supper which commemorates, under the symbols of bread and wine, the sacrifice of Christ for your sins; and in which by faith his merits are applied to your souls for your justification, and his grace for your sanctification and comfort. "As ye have received of the Lord Jesus how ye ought to walk and to please God, is it your daily endeavour to abound more and more "---to exhibit all "the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace,

long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance '?" If you are not thus sanctified, thus holy in your tempers, and in your lives, whatever may be your hopes of salvation, from a reliance on the merits of Christ, you are still in "the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." You are among the number of those who call the Saviour Lord, Lord, and do not his will -and his language to them will be-" Depart from me, I never knew you a."

Oh—my brethren, how diligent should we be, lest we frustrate the grace of God, and fall short of our salvation.

But, if by that grace of God which is freely given to all men, you have in penitence and faith received the baptismal washing, the seal of baptism to your purification from sin; or, if having received in your infancy this sacramental washing, you have in sincerity assumed your baptismal engagements, and received renewed communications of grace, in "the laying on of hands;" and if through the influences of the Divine Spirit conveyed and confirmed to you by the ordinances of the Church, you have been "sanctified," "transformed by the renewing of your minds," daily mortifying the deeds of the body, abounding in every good word and work, and following after that "holiness, without which no man shall see

² Gal. v. 22, 23.

the Lord "-you are among the justified servants of God. His tayour is your portion; and his grace your defence. If you "continue in this state of salvation to your live's end *," growing in grace, in the knowledge, the love, and the service of your God and Saviour—you will be among the number of those who shall finally be saved—whom the Judge of all before the assembled universe, will pronounce blessed—whom "washed, justified, sanctified in his name and by his Spirit," he will advance to a kingdom that never shall be moved—a kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world—a kingdom of light and glory.

^b Heb. xii. 14.

^{*} Catechism of the Church.

SERMON XXII.

THE SON DELIVERING UP THE KINGDOM TO THE FATHER.

[FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.]

1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

THE Gospel presents the most sublime subjects on which the human mind can exercise its faculties. In the Divine persons of the Godhead; in their counselling from all eternity to save the human race; in their respective agencies in this glorious work: in the incarnation of the eternal

Son; in the sacrifice of his cross; in his victory over the grave; in his exaltation to glory; in the majesty and the triumphs of his coming as the Judge of the world; in the final awards of the righteous and the wicked—we behold subjects of contemplation, ennobling and gratifying, and feutful of holmess and consolation.

Even beyond that tremendous scene, when the heavens pass away, when the elements melt, when the earth is consumed, the Gospel extends our view; and presents an event most sublime and interesting. Jesus Christ the Son of God, in his human nature, sits in glory as the Judge of the nations. He takes his departure from the world, burning beneath him, to that new heaven where his people are enthroned in glory everlasting. The sublime and glorious events that distinguish the course of the great Mediator, do not terminate even here. Jesus Christ has still a part to act infinitely august and interesting. The Apostle delineates it in the passage which I have recited to you.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

The Son delivering up the kingdom to God the Father, is the solemn event here presented to our contemplation.

There are three inquiries which will lead to a full view of this important scene.

I What is the kingdom which Christ is represented as surrendering?

11 At what period does the surrender take place.

III. What are the consequences of this surrender of his kingdom.

These inquiries will also lead to an explanation of the various parts of the passage. 1. What is the *kingdom* which Christ is represented as delivering up?

There is a kingdom which, from all eternity, was the Son of God's, and which will continue to be his through endless ages-That kingdom which he possesses in virtue of his participation of the fulness of the Godhead; of his divine character as " the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, the Almighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords and—that dominion by which, being "before all things"," he "spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast ";" by which, "upholding all things by the word of his power d," he reigns as now Lord of the inhabitants of the earth, so to all eternity Lord of the armies of heaven This kingdom and dominion possessed by Christ as the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, can never be surrendered. The Son of God cannot lay aside his Divine prerogative, nor relinquish his Divine dominion.

But in the eternal counsels of the Godhead, it was planned that the Son should receive another kingdom and another dominion. In order to accomplish that scheme which Infinite Wisdom and mercy devised for the redemption of an apostate and sinful world, it was determined,

a Rev. i. 8. Col. i. 17. Ps. xxxiii. 9. Heb. i. 3.

that the Son of God should assume a body of flesh; should bear the sorrows, as well as the sins of men; and should make atonement for iniquity, by shedding his blood upon the cross. For this his suffering of death, even the death of the cross, God hath "crowned" the man Christ Jesus, in whom dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead, with glory and honour"; placing him, in his human nature, over the work of his hands, "putting all things in subjection under his feet," giving him "all power in heaven and in earth"."

Thus exalted to be a Prince and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as Mediator between God and man, rules in the kingdom of grace. In this kingdom God the Father, as is expressed in the words of the text, hath "put all things under Christ," as Mediator. But in this kingdom he reigns as Mediator in subjection to God the Father. For, as the Apostle argues-" But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him." God the Father, who put all things under the feet of the Son, as Mediator, is excepted from the universal dominion which Christ exercises. In the kingdom of grace, in his mediatorial character, as Prophet, Priest, and King, Jesus Christ dispenses the blessings of salvation; extending pardon to the penitent, instructing, guiding

⁹ Heb. ii. 9,

Matt. xxviii. 18.

and defending them by his word and Holy Spirit, and finally vanquishing all their enemies. He is "the head over all things to his Church " and people; governing and over-ruling all things to promote the interests of that spiritual kingdom of which he is the King and Ruler. Still in this his mediatorial capacity, he is subject to the Father who hath "set him, as his King, on the holy hill of Zion";" and in whose name, and by whose authority, he administers the affairs of this mediatorial kingdom, and exercises his regal sway.

It is this kingdom of grace, constituted for the salvation of fallen man, and held by Jesus Christ as Mediator between God and man, which Christ delivers up to God even the Father; and not the universal eternal kingdom which he possesses in virtue of his union with the Godhead, God over all blessed for evermore.

We are now prepared for the second inquiry.

II. At what *period* does Jesus Christ surrender his mediatorial kingdom?

The period is styled in the text, "the end"—"then cometh the end." And it is designated by the events—"when he," that is, Jesus Christ the Son, "shall have put down all rule, and all

authority, and power," " hath put all enemies under his feet," "when all things shall be subdued unto him." The object of the spiritual kingdom of which Christ is the head, is to subvert and subdue every thing which opposeth itself against God, and his purposes of mercy towards his faithful people; and thus to effect their complete salvation in their establishment in everlasting glory and felicity. Accordingly, until this object is effected, the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ continues; he reigns as the head and Almighty Ruler of this kingdom, agreeably to the declaration of God the Father, when he constituted his Son, in his human nature, as Mediator—" The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool'." But when this great event takes place; "when he shall have put down all rule, and authority and power," either in men or the hosts of darkness, which opposed his grace, and sought to defeat his purposes of mercy; when "he hath put all enemies under his feet," made the opposers of his kingdom bow to his Almighty power, or trampled them under foot in the fury of his indignation; when, having rescued his faithful servants from the sins, and sorrows, and temptations of the world, he finally raises them, in bodies incorruptible and glorious,

to a state of fulness of joy; when death, the last enemy, is thus destroyed; and the righteous have taken possession of the seats prepared for them before the foundation of the world; and when the rebellious subjects of Christ's kingdom, whom his mercy could not subdue, are consigned, by his justice, with the devil and his angels, to everlasting fire—all things are then subdued unto Christ "the Son." The object of his mediatorial kingdom in the salvation of the righteous and the perdition of the ungodly, is accomplished—"then cometh the end, and he delivers up the kingdom of God even the Father."

III. But what are the consequences of this surrender of his kingdom? This was the third inquiry proposed.

They are described in the text—"then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

"Then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him," that is—the mediatorial kingdom which the Son, in his human nature, received of the Father, shall cease; and in his human nature he shall no longer reign as *Mediator*, but shall be subject to God the Father. The right to conduct the dis-

pensation of mercy to the world, to instruct men as their Prophet, to intercede for them as their Priest, to govern and defend them as their King the Son of God received from the Father. It was the reward of his humiliation, of his sufferings and death as the Son of man -" Therefore," we are told, "God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name k." With this kingdom he was solemnly invested when at his resurrection and ascension to heaven, God declared to him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"-"I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion"-" Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool 1." The object of this mediatorial kingdom which Christ received of the Father, was to enable him to "bring many sons unto glory";" to "purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works";" to redeem and save them from the hands of their enemies; to make them conquerors over death and the grave; to exalt them to a kingdom of glory eternal in the heavens. But when these objects are accomplished; when his faithful people, exalted to the bliss and immortality of heaven, and rescued from error and temptation, from death and the grave, need no longer a Prophet to teach them, a Priest to intercede for them, or a King to govern and defend

k Philip. ii. 9.

¹ Ps. cx. 1.

^ш Нев. іі. 10.

ⁿ Titus ii. 14.

them, the mediatorial kingdom of the Son ceases, he delivers it up to God the Father, and in his human nature becomes subject to him. Christ, as Mediator, was indeed subject to God the Father before this surrender of his kingdom; but after this surrender he is subject to the Father, not as Mediator, but in his private capacity as the Son of man.

But are we not assured that his redeemed shall reign with him for ever; that he "shall reign for ever and ever ";" and does not the Church universal, therefore, in one of her creeds profess her belief, that of "his kingdom there shall be no end." How can these things be, if Christ delivers up his kingdom to God the Father? It is only his mediatorial kingdom which he delivers up, that kingdom which had for its object the salvation of the redeemed; and when this object is accomplished in their advancement to immortality and glory, the necessity of this kingdom ceases, and the Son delivers it up to God the Father. But still the glorified humanity of Christ retains power and dominion by virtue of its union with the Son of God. This humanity is to be co-eternal with his divinity; and thus, though the human nature of the Son will in itself be subject to the Father, no longer reigning over the mediatorial kingdom, yet by virtue of its eternal union with the second person

of the Trinity, the Son of God, it will possess everlasting power and dominion. In this sense Christ will "reign for ever and ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

After the Son thus surrenders his mediatorial kingdom—"God will be all in all." Here it is worthy of remark, that the Apostle omits the appellation, the Father. And the meaning of this passage, therefore, evidently is, not that God the Father "will be all in all,"—but that God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the eternal Godhead, will be "all in all." The Son as Mediator exercised all power in heaven and in earth. But this power ceasing, when he delivers up the kingdom; all dominion hereafter is exercised, not by the Son as Mediator, but by the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore. "God" is thus "all in all,"—the only source of power and dominion, of glory, and felicity, the only object of homage and obedience.

Thus, brethren, has been unfolded to you, the important event which takes place when "the end cometh; when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and all power. For he must reign till he hath put all things under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all

things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him. then shall the Son also be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

This passage has been sometimes urged against the Divinity of Jesus Christ. It is contended, that as he is represented as delivering up his kingdom to God the Father, and becoming subject unto him, he cannot partake of the Divinity; for it would be impious to suppose subjection of any kind in one of the persons of the eternal Godhead

But do not they who believe in the Divinity of Christ, assert also his humanity? Did not that blessed personage, who in relation to his Divinity maintained his equality with the Father-" I and the Father are one "," - in reference to his humanity declare, "My Father is greater than 19?" Was not he who was styled the "Son of God," "the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person," "the Word who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God'," called also the "Son of man, the Son of David "," bearing our sins and carry-

⁴ John xiv. 28. Heb. i. 3. p John x. 30. 1 Matt. viii. 20. &c. xxiv. 27. 5 John i. 1. B b

ing our sorrows, tempted in all respects like as we are? And is not the conclusion, hence, irresistible, that in him the Divine and human natures are united, so that this "one Christ," is "very God and very man." Incomprehensible, indeed, is this mystery of godliness. But is not every thing relative to the Divine nature inscrutable? Who can, by searching, find out God?

Carry with you then, brethren, in your interpretation of those parts of the sacred writings which relate to Jesus Christ, the truth that in his person there was a mysterious union of the Divine and human nature, that he was God as well as man; and they will appear luminous and consistent. Thus the subjection of the Son to the Father, in the passage which has been under consideration, is not the subjection of the Son as one of the persons of the Godhead, but as the Son of man. It is the subjection of his glorified human hature *.

The surrender of his mediatorial kingdom by

^{*} In that passage, "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, not the Son," &c. (Mark xiii. 32.) our Saviour speaks of himself in his capacity as the Son of man. And the "day," the precise time of the vengeance to be executed on Jerusalem, typical of that of the final judgment, was no part of the revelation of the Father to him in this capacity.

Jesus Christ should not be contemplated but with awful apprehension, or with holy joy.

With apprehension, if we are the enemies of the Lord Jesus; with joy, if we are his obedient subjects.

The enemies of Jesus Christ should contemplate the end of his mediatorial kingdom with apprehension and awe. It does not terminate till he hath "put down all rule and authority and power; till he hath put all enemies under his feet." What then will be their destiny? He was exalted to be the King of Zion. And they refused homage to him, to whom all power was given in heaven and in earth. They refused to rely for pardon on the sceptre of his mercy. And he will execute upon them the tremendous threat, "I will rule them as with a rod of iron; I will break them in pieces like a potter's vessel"."

Faithful servants of the Lord Jesus! contemplate the august event, when he delivers up his mediatorial kingdom with holy joy. He will not relinquish his office as your Mediator, until he hath put down under his feet all your enemies; until he hath subdued your last enemy, death; until he hath made you kings and priests unto

God; exalted you to reign with him for ever. Then he delivers up his kingdom of grace. "God" becomes "all in all." The eternal Godhead will be the source of your glory and felicity. Still, God the Son, though in his glorified human nature, subject to the Father, will in that nature, as the eternal Son, be the object of your worship and your love. You shall reign with him, your Redeemer, the Son of God, in felicity and glory unspeakable, and without end.

Come then, and in the memorials which he instituted, celebrate the praises of him, through whose grace and power you are made heirs of glory. Nourished and strengthened by his spiritual body and blood, continue his servants, submit yourselves to his holy will and pleasure, study to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all your days; and you shall finally witness the glorious termination of his kingdom as *Mediator*; when you shall reign with him as the *King of glory*; and join for ever in that ascription of homage—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

SERMON XXIII.

THE PRACTICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

[TRINITY SUNDAY.]

EPHESIANS ii. 18.

Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

THE doctrine of the Trinity commands our faith, on the authority of that Almighty but incomprehensible Being, who has revealed his Divine nature as subsisting in three Persons.

Persons are known and distinguished by titles, by attributes, and by operations. Distinct titles, attributes and operations are ascribed in the sacred writings to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And yet while there is a Trinity of persons, there is a unity of essence or of nature; for "the Lord our God is one Lord"."

To object to this doctrine, and still more to reject it, because we are unable to comprehend it, would be an act of the greatest folly. For, if we doubt or reject whatever we are unable to comprehend, there is scarcely any truth, not merely of religion, but even of human science, to which we should assent.

It is impossible indeed that the truths of God's word can contradict the clear, strong, and unbiassed dictates of reason. And therefore, prior to all examination of their scriptural claims, we pronounce that certain tenets cannot be revealed in the word of God. Thus, for example, the doctrine of transubstantiation, that the bread and wine of the holy Eucharist is not only spiritually, "verily and indeed" in force and effect, but actually the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; and not merely his body and blood, but his soul and Divinity—this doctrine so directly and palpably contradicts our reason, that we are justified in immediately rejecting it. The doctrines, that the benevolent and just Parent of the universe will condemn us to everlasting misery, not merely for our own sins committed against knowledge and against grace, but for the sin of Adam in which we had no participation—that he who is righteous in all his ways, and is no respector of persons, should select certain persons as the subjects of his everlasting favour, and doom others to remediless perdition without any regard to their qualifications or their conduct, are tenets which are abhorrent to our reason and our feelings, and which ought instantly to be rejected.

But the doctrine of the Trinity is of a very different nature. To use the common but the just mode of expression in regard to it-it transcends our reason, but does not contradict it. And the difference between things contradicting our reason and things transcending it, is obvious. Thus, that there is a Being who is the cause of all things, and himself without cause, infinite and eternal, existing without any limits of space or of time, is a truth which transcends our reason, and of which therefore reason is not a competent judge. But that this Being, just and good, should create intelligent creatures for the express purpose of condemning them by an absolute decree to endless misery, is a tenet which directly contradicts reason, and which cannot be true. The existence of three Persons in one God is a doctrine which transcends human comprehension, but is in no degree abhorrent to the dictates or the feelings of unbiassed reason.

On the contrary, my brethren, it shall be my object in this discourse briefly to shew you that it is a doctrine of the most *important and valuable* practical consequences, and therefore every way congenial with the dictates of the understanding and the feelings of the heart.

Its practical importance is exhibited in my text, which represents our access unto God as effected through Jesus Christ, by the agency of the Spirit*.

Considering man as under the dominion of error, of sin, of sorrow, and of death; the points most interesting to him are

His redemption from error,

His release from the guilt and the dominion of sin, His support under sorrow,

And his *deliverance* from *death*, by his translation to an immortal existence.

In reference then to these points, let us consider the value and importance of the practical efficacy of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead.

1. With regard to man's redemption from error.

God makes known his will to man by Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. If Christ be a Divine person—then God does not convey his instructions, through a human organ, nor in the celestial voice

On the practical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity much useful matter is contained in an excellent treatise entitled, "The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity stated and defended." By Thomas Hartwell Horne, M.A. And valuable information on the Divinity of Christ will be found in a volume of Tracts by Dr. Burgess, the Bishop of St. David's. The whole subject of the Trinity is discussed with admirable perspicuity and force in the treatises of Dr. Waterland.

of the most perfect of angelic creatures: but he speaks the words of Divine truth by his eternal Son; "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." What clearness, what certainty, what majesty, what force and what interest does this give to the truths delivered. When God indeed speaks even by the humblest of his creatures, it is our duty to hear and to obey. But still, the dignity of the agent gives clearness and majesty and interest to the instructions which he delivers.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past unto your fathers by the Prophets, hath spoken unto you by his Son "." Lips, touched with a coal from the altar, poured forth divine strains to God's people of old. They heard the declarations of a Lawgiver and Prophet whom Jehovah distinguished above all others, by conversing with him face to face. But-now, Christians -the voice of him "who spake as never man spake " addresses you, " God manifest in the flesh " is your instructor. He, who is the Lord of heaven and of earth, proclaims laws to you. There must be clearness and certainty in instructions thus delivered. Infinite Majesty surrounds an Instructor in whom "dwells the fulness of the Godhead "." With awful force and interest must his instructions impress the heart.

Hebrews i. 1.

c John vii. 46.

^{4 1} Tim. iii. 16.

c Col. ii. 9.

There was tremendous guilt and dreadful punishment incurred by rejecting the laws proclaimed by Moses, who, however distinguished by familiar converse with Jehovah, still bore the imperfections of human nature. What then must be the guilt and punishment incurred by those who reject the counsel, and refuse to hear the voice of him who "speaketh from heaven;" and speaketh with authority, as the Son of God, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge f."

Christians, of what immense practical importance is the doctrine that your Instructor is not a man like yourselves, but the second Person of the adorable Trinity, the Son of God, who was from everlasting, "from the beginning, or ever the world was "!"

II. With regard to man's release from the guilt and dominion of sin, the doctrine of the Trinity, which proclaims to him a Divine Saviour, is of the highest practical importance.

If pardon were proclaimed by a mere man, even though he bore the commission of Jehovah, would it come with as much force and interest as when the Son of God leaves the courts of heaven, and addresses to us this message of

mercy? If our exemption from the punishment of the violated law of our Almighty Sovereign were announced without any vindication of his offended authority, any exhibition of his just displeasure against sin; would the heart of the penitent be assailed by no doubts and fears, when, contemplating the purity and the rigour of the law which he had transgressed, and the holiness and the justice of the Sovereign whom he had offended, he beholds no reparation of this violated law, no vindication of this holiness or justice? Or, would the mercy and the love of God the Father so sensibly affect the heart as when we behold him so loving the world as "to give his only-begotten Son," so delighting in mercy as to lay on him the iniquities of us all, and to bruise him, that by his stripes we might be healed? It is the doctrine that a Divine personage has rendered perfect obedience to the violated law of God, sustained its penalties, and thus vindicated the authority, and established the holiness and the justice of the Ruler of the universe, which exhibits his attributes in perfect harmony, arms with the most powerful force the denunciations and the invitations of his Gospel, and conveys to the penitent the fullest assurance of pardon.

But, in the doctrine of the Trinity, we thus find not only the sure pledge of release from the guilt of sin, but the most effectual provision for our redemption from its dominion.

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The offices of enlightening our darkened understandings, of sanctifying our corrupt natures, of aiding us in the discharge of duty, of leading us "in the ways of God's laws and in the works of his commandments," of "putting into our minds good desires, and enabling us to bring the samé to good effect;" of carrying us through all difficulties, and strengthening us to overcome all temptations, are operations assigned in Scripture to the Holy Ghost. Now, if the Holy Ghost be not a Divine person, what is the security that all these important offices will be discharged? What pledge have we for our release from the dominion of sin? Can any but Divine power cast light into a darkened understanding, rectify a depraved will, change corrupt affections, break man's bondage to his lust, and conquer the formidable temptations which constantly assail him?

It is in vain to plead as those do who reject the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, that the work of illumination and sanctification is performed by God the Father. He has transferred this work to the Holy Ghost. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come," said Christ, "he will guide you unto all truth ";" "He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment "." "Ye are sanctified," said an inspired Apostle, "by

h John xvi. 13.

i John xvi. 8.

the Spirit of God "." "He it is which helpeth our infirmities"." Destroy, then, the Divinity of the agent by whom man is to be enlightened, sanctified, and made victorious over temptation, and you lay prostrate all his hopes of deliverance from the dominion of his sins. For his guide, his sanctifier, his deliverer, is not divine.

No—Christians, you have a better hope. You are called to contemplate that Holy Spirit which is to enlighten, sanctify, and sustain you, as one of the three Persons of the incomprehensible Godhead; and possessing, therefore, the fulness of light, of grace and of power. There is no darkness which your Divine Guide cannot dispel, no corrupt affection which your Divine Sanctifier cannot purify, no mighty temptation which his energy cannot subdue. Implore, then, the Holy Ghost to guide, to sanctify you, to give you victory. Be diligent and faithful, and your bondage to sin shall be broken; your restoration to the Divine image completely effected; and your triumph over temptation achieved.

III. But there is a third view in which the practical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity may be presented.

Considering ourselves as subject to afflictions

¹ Rom. viii. 26.

and trials, as severe as they are various and numerous, that doctrine must be of inexpressible value, which affords to us full support and consolation.

This doctrine is the doctrine of the Trinity. For it is this which presents to us, in the person of him who "carried our sorrows"," who is "afflicted in all our afflictions"," and who "is touched with a feeling for our infirmities"," not the most powerful of earthly friends, but the Son of God, to whom "all power is given in heaven and in earth." It is this doctrine, which, in the Holy Ghost, whom it holds forth as our Comforter, places us under the consoling guidance of one of the Persons of the Godhead. There is a grandeur in these ideas that is calculated in the highest degree to elevate our faith and joy.

Afflicted and tempted Christian! thou hast a friend who is afflicted with thee; who, having been tempted like as thou art, sympathizes with thee in all thy trials. Thou hast a Comforter, whose peculiar office it is to convey consolation and strength to thy sorrowing and fainting spirit. And thy friend and thy comforter are not the most powerful and tender of thy fellow mortals—they are God the Son, God the Holy Ghost. Let not the grandeur of the truth excite thy dis-

m Isaiah liii. 4.

[•] Heb. iv. 15.

ⁿ Isaiah lxiii. 9.

P Matt. xxviii. 18.

trust of its reality. The nature of the Godhead, whom thou art called to adore, is veiled in a glory inaccessible by created vision. Thou hast no cause, therefore, to distrust whatever is revealed concerning it. And thy faith, thy hope, and thy gratitude should be roused to the highest exercise by the truths revealed, that in the Holy Ghost thy Comforter, the consolations of the Godhead are laid open to thee; and in the person of Jesus Christ, who was clothed with the same nature under whose sorrows thou art borne down, whose course like thine was watered by tears, and, more than thine, moistened by his blood; who, exalted to the throne of Majesty in the heavens, never for a moment takes his pitying eye from thee nor withdraws his sustaining hand; thou hast God the Son, of Divine power and glory, for thy friend-thy friend, whose truth is pledged, and whose infinite power can execute his promise, that "all things shall work together for thy good q." Believe this, Christian, believe it firmly, and what sorrows can overwhelm thee? What trials can dismay thee? Through the darkest path of suffering, Divine consolations are shed upon thee, and a Divine arm conducts thee. Yet a little while and thy course which is now clouded, shall terminate in light

q Rom. viii. 28.

and bliss—thy last enemy, death, shall be over-come. For,

IV. It is in reference to this *final* triumph over *death*, that the practical value of the doctrine of the Trinity is fully established.

It is in our last struggle that we most need strength. It is this contest with death, this separation of soul and body, this disruption of the ties that bind us to life, this entrance on an unknown world, which nature most dreads. But by that doctrine which establishes the divinity of Jesus Christ, the full confidence of triumph is given to our souls. Jesus Christ, the Saviour in whom we believe, declared that "he went before to prepare a place for us, that where he is, there we may be also "." It was his gracious promise, "I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die "." It was he who passed "through the grave and gate of death, that he might conduct his followers to a joyful resurrection '." And it is this "righteous Judge" who, the believer, like the Apostle, trusts, will "give him at the last day, a crown of righteousness"."

¹ John xiv. 2, 3.

⁵ John xi. 25.

^t Collect for Easter Even.

^{* 2} Tim. iv. 8.

But if Christ be a mere man, what confidence can we have in the fulfilment of his promise? Can a frail man prepare a place for us in heaven; sustain the fainting soul in her encounter with her deadly foe, and give her victory; and change corruption into incorruption, and invest mortal with immortality?

No. Christian—Thou art assured that the Conqueror by whom thy victory over thy last enemy is to be achieved, is the Lord of life and death. Jesus. thy Saviour, thy guide through life, thy sympathizing friend and almighty protector in all the trials of thy course, will also be with thee in thy final contest; to sustain thee, to comfort thee; to animate thee with the hope of glory. He, its almighty Guardian, will watch over thy sleeping dust. He, its Redeemer and Lord, will accompany thy soul to the resting place of departed spirits. He, the Judge of quick and dead, will rouse thy body from the sleep of the grave, and call thy spirit from the paradise of the blest, and unite them incorruptible and glorious. He, the Lord of heaven, will exalt thee to that heaven thy final abode, where thou shalt be ever with him in the fruition of unspeakable and endless joys. Christian-He will do all these things; for he is "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the Almighty"-" King of kings, Lord of lords a."

a Rev. i. 8. xvii. 14.

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If then we wish to be assured of redemption from error, of release from sin, of support under affliction, of triumph in death, and of bliss through eternity, let us stedfastly cleave to that doctrine which gives us in the Son a Divine Saviour, and in the Holy Ghost a Divine Comforter; and let us, with humble and penitent and obedient hearts, in the language of the Church, give thanks unto "God the Father, for the precious death and merits of his Son Jesus Christ, and for sending to us the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who are one with him in his eternal Godhead *."

^{*} Communion Service.

SERMON XXIV.

OUR KNOWLEDGE HERE AND HEREAFTER CONTRASTED.

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known.

In the present state of his existence, imperfection and mystery obscure all the researches of man. The attributes and will of the Being who made, who rules, and who is to judge us; the way of access to him through a mediator; our duty and our final destiny are revealed so far as is necessary to direct our conduct, to arouse our fears, to excite our hopes, and thus to animate us in pursuing that path of life which conducts to fulness of joy. But when we attempt to discover even the essences of the things that surround us, and the reasons of the physical constitution of the universe; and, above all, when our aspiring aim soars to scan the Divine nature and perfections, and the reasons of the moral

government of the Sovereign of the universe, and seeks to bring the spiritual and eternal world to a level with sensible objects; then are we compelled to admit, that we "know only in

part."

This imperfection of our knowledge results from our condition as finite creatures; from our situation in the present world, which is only the introductory stage of our existence; and from the nature of the truths of religion which respect objects infinitely exalted above our imperfect capacities. Here, therefore, we "know only in part." But when we are translated to our final state of being, our faculties will be strengthened, our sphere of intellectual vision enlarged, divine truths will be more fully laid open to our improved and elevated intellect-"We shall know, even as also we are known."

Let us then consider,

The imperfection of our knowledge in this life. and the increase of our knowledge which will take place in our future state of existence, in reference to

The works of God.

The dispensations of Providence, and

The economy of grace.

In all these respects we now "know only in part." Hereafter, we shall "know, even as also we are known."

I. With respect to the works of God.

Now we "know them only in part." Narrow is the range which our imperfect faculties permit us to take through the works of the Eternal. We are fastened to a small spot of creation, and our vision is limited to a short distance around us. This earth is but a diminutive part of that universe which the fiat of the Almighty Lord called into existence. And yet to this earth is our knowledge almost entirely confined. Innumerable worlds roll through the immeasurable space, which we in vain seek to grasp in our vision, and brighten that firmament whose elevation is not to be measured by human power. And the nature of these worlds, and the purposes for which they were created, whether, like this which we inhabit, they too are the seats of intelligent agents, and what are the condition and the destination of these beings, are subjects of speculation but not of knowledge.

Not only is our knowledge thus limited in extent, it is imperfect in degree. How partial is our acquaintance with the bodies around us! How many of their properties may be wholly

unknown to us! Numerous as are the beautiful and sublime scenes which delight and awe us, we can readily conceive that, with faculties more enlarged and vigorous, their beauty and sublimity would be more clearly discerned and more powerfully felt.

Imperfect, then, as is our knowledge of the appearances of things, what do we know of their essences and causes? Here all is darkness. In exploring these recesses of nature, the torch of reason is extinguished. She lights us to only an imperfect knowledge of the properties of things. An impenetrable veil conceals from her most penetrating ray their essences and causes.

The works of the Creator, calculated as the contemplation of them is to enlarge and elevate and delight the soul, and to fill us with profound admiration of the wisdom and power which arranged and preserves, and the goodness which animates them, we *now* "know only in *part*."

But there is a higher state of being in which we shall "know, even as also we are known." With faculties enlarged and invigorated, we shall then range through all the works of the Almighty, and leave no part of creation unexplored. On "angels wing," and with angels ardour, we shall soar through all the varied ranks of intelligences which animate the universe of God; and even reach that eternal Being, from whom

proceed the glory and the goodness, which, in the creatures who bear his image, we have admired and loved.

The physical works, also, of the Creator, our improved faculties will enable us more clearly to discern. Their properties, their uses, their excellencies, their beautiful and sublime scenery, will no longer leave obscure impressions on our minds. They will shine upon us in their unveiled splendour, and excite the ever-increasing emotions of admiration and delight. Those secrets of nature which now baffle our researches will then be disclosed; and the investigation and view of them will be a ceaseless source of wonder and of pleasure.

Thus occupied in contemplating the works of the Creator, no longer obscured to our vision, "we shall know, even as also we are known." And the glory and the goodness so strongly manifested in that "new heaven and new earth a," through which, with enlarged and vigorous faculties, we shall unceasingly range, will call forth the emotions of holy adoration. The warm and loud chorus of praise shall ascend from the beatified hosts. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty b."

Not only in reference to the works of nature, but with respect

a Rev. xxi. 1.

b Rev. xv. 3.

II. To the dispensations of Providence, we may be said to "know only in part."

Faith indeed impresses on us the consolatory conviction, that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of the seat" of the Ruler of the universe. But faith supplies the place of knowledge. The purposes of the sovereign providence of God, we are assured, are infinitely holy, just, and good; and to a certain degree, we can perceive these purposes accomplished in the government of the world. Still we "know only in part."

That vice should often flourish in the seats of wealth, of power, and enjoyment, and virtue languish in obscurity, or groan under oppression; that injustice should accomplish its fraudulent plans, in circumventing the unwary, and deceiving the honest; that unprincipled ambition should march to the throne of dominion, prostrating the virtuous and good—that these should be the results of the Providence of him who ruleth over all in righteousness, is a mystery which confounds us, and forcibly teaches us the painful lesson, that now we "know only in part."

The same dark cloud envelopes the dispensations of Providence to individuals. How often do the elements of heaven or the injustice of man

^c Psalm lxxxix. 14.

blast the labours of honest industry! How often is the cup of felicity raised to our lips—and dashed away! How often does fell disease ravage the seats of domestic bliss! How often does a parent, the support and guardian of a loved child. or a child, the solace and delight of a revered parent, sink into an unexpected grave! How often does death pluck from the embraces of affection and friendship, those whose piety and talents, shining with intense and pure ardour, engaged for their possessors universal love, and qualified them extensively to dispense happiness! Alas—while in bitterness we mourn under these dark visitations of Providence, it is faith only which teaches us the lesson of resignation to that Being who rules over all, but whose counsels and purposes we "know only in part."

But faith too reveals the consolatory assurance, that the period will arrive when we shall "know, even as also we are known." In that perfect state of existence, on which we shall enter when we have passed this probationary scene, the darkness which covered the dispensations of Providence will be dispersed. The holy, the wise, the good ends which they accomplish will be unfolded. Then the false suspicions and the secret murmurs which we may have directed against God's government of the world, will be silenced before the glorious exhibition of his

holiness, his justice, and his mercy. Then the prosperity of the wicked, the success of the unjust, the triumphs of the oppressor, will appear to have been permitted for purposes infinitely wise and benevolent. "All things will have worked together for good to those who loved God d." "The Lord indeed had his way in the whirlwind "," and in the storm. But viewing the holy counsels of his providence, we shall adore the mercy which even there directed his goings, and the justice which went before his face f. Not only will all repining at those misfortunes and bereavements which agonized our souls be hushed, but contemplating the gracious ends which they accomplished, we shall bless the hand which chastened us in mercy. The veil removed from the counsels of God's providence, we shall adore that infinite wisdom, which from partial evil produced universal good. And our souls glowing with gratitude and love, we shall unite in the song of homage, which for ever ascends from the hosts of heaven-"Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints g."

As in reference to the works of God and the dispensations of Providence, so also with respect to

d Rom. viii. 28.

f Psalm lxxxix, 14.

c Nahum i. 3.

g Rev. xv 3.

III. The economy of redemption, we "know only in part."

That Being whom we adore as the Creator and Governor of the universe—who can by searching find him out? Resplendent as even now appear his attributes in his works, in his ways and in his holy word, how much of the lustre which beams from them in that highest heavens, where he displays his glory, never reaches this region of imperfection and sin.

The nature of the Godhead, the Trinity of persons in one Divine essence, the truth which lies at the foundation of the Christian system; what mystery envelopes it-how entirely does it defy our comprehension! We know indeed all that is necessary to direct our duty and excite our confidence. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost revealed as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, we worship and adore—we trust in them for preservation in being, for redemption from sin, for sanctification in soul and body. Still "we know only in part." The nature of the Godhead; the mode of subsistence of three persons in one divine essence, are concealed from us. It is the highest exercise of faith only -reasonable indeed, for it rests on the authority of God, who cannot err or deceive; and consolatory, for it opens to us the means of salvation, from sin and death-it is the highest

exercise of faith only, which leads us to "acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the unity *."

The incarnation of the eternal Word; the assumption of our flesh by the Son of God, so that "two whole and perfect natures, the Godhead and the manhood were joined together in one person, who is Christ, very God and very man †"—this truth, which is so plainly revealed, and which accomplishes purposes infinitely benevolent, the redemption of a fallen race, we know only in part. We know the fact, that "the Son of God, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was made man;" but further, our most vigorous faculties cannot reach. The mode of the incarnation, of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, we cannot find out.

That sin is propitiated by the blood of Christ is a truth which, in its beneficent results, rescues the sinner from condemnation, and administers comfort to his despairing soul. The fact is revealed, and it is consolatory; but the reasons of it we know not. Why without shedding of blood there should be no remission of guilt, is a mystery which remains enveloped in the unsearchable counsels of the Godhead.

^{*} Collect for Trinity Sunday.

The influences of the Holy Spirit on the soul effecting its redemption from the dominion of sin, its establishment in holiness, its consolation under calamity, and its entire sanctification and peace. is a truth which the sinfulness and frailty of man render necessary, and which God in his word has plainly revealed. But "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth "." And the mode also by which the Holy Spirit operates on our minds, so as to influence their thoughts and their determinations without violating their free agency; and to "inspire us with good desires, and enable us to bring the same to good effect *," is unknown to us.

We are assured that there shall be a resurrection of the dead; that this "corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality"—And oh, how cheering is this light which reaches us from the darkness of the tomb! But the mode by which our bodies shall be collected in their dispersed atoms, and uniting again "bone to its bone, sinew to its sinew, and flesh to its flesh," become the same bodies in which we here sojourn, changed indeed and glorious; this is a mystery which baffles our comprehension, and which we can only resolve into the

^{*} John iii. 8. * Collect for Easter. i 1 Cor. xv. 53.

power of him who first spake us into existence. And the nature also of the glory with which they shall be invested, and of the felicity which awaits our entire nature in this its final destination, we "know only in part."

But the period will come when we shall "know, even as also we are known." In that exalted state for which we are destined, we shall know what is the glory promised to our mortal bodies at the resurrection of the just; for we shall then be invested with it. We shall know what is the happiness promised to the righteous; for we shall then enjoy it. We shall then possess that fulness of felicity which now eye cannot see; which now ear cannot hear; and which now the heart of man cannot conceive. We shall then be occupied in pious wonder at those operations of the Divine Spirit more clearly unfolded to us, by which, our corrupted nature renovated, we have been conducted through the changes and sorrows of our state of trial, to the glories of our rest. Our souls will be filled with holy gratitude and awe when we contemplate "the mystery of godliness." "Washed from sin in the blood of the Lamb," we shall no longer wonder how this blood exerted its propitiating efficacy. Adoring the eternal Word seated in the glory of his nature as the King and Ruler of the redeemed hosts, it will no longer be a subject of mysterious speculation, how he was made flesh and dwelt

among us. Continually advancing in the knowledge of the glorious Godhead, the adoration and the bliss of our souls will ever increase. With awe and transport like that which swells the praises of Cherubim and Seraphim, shall we unite with them in the eternal ascription of homage—" Holy, holy, holy God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come k."

" Now we know only in part; but then shall we know, even as also we are known."

Let this truth teach us humility.

The mind of man is inquisitive and aspiring; reaching upward with insatiable ardour to the most elevated tracts of knowledge. This lofty aim of the human mind is a proof of its high nature and exalted destiny. And when the inquisitive search of the intellect is restrained within due bounds, and exercised only on its legitimate objects, facts, physical or moral, its energy is strengthened; and we find in the increase of our knowledge an increasing fund of unfailing and pure enjoyment. But, when prying into those secret things which belong unto the Lord, it leads us to reject truths bearing the stamp of divine authority, merely because they transcend

k Rev. iv. 8.

our comprehension; this aspiring curiosity of the human mind becomes absurd and presumptuous—absurd, because the most familiar objects being in some respects incomprehensible, our scepticism would be universal,—and presumptuous, because it attempts to find out what God, all wise and all powerful, has concealed.

Brethren, let us then cultivate that humility which our character as finite and dependant creatures, and our situation in a probationary scene, so powerfully inculcate. Let us humbly receive the truths which God has promulgated, though they exceed the comprehension of our limited intellect. This is the dictate of reason. subject is perfect knowledge attainable. Even those truths of nature and religion, which reason cordially receives, are in some degree enveloped in mystery. Who hesitates in acknowledging the existence of an intelligent and supreme Creator! And yet who can comprehend an uncaused cause of all things-spiritual, infinite in nature, eternal in existence. Let us not doubt other truths bearing the stamp of him to whom we owe the submission of the intellect which he gave us, because they are incomprehensible. To "know only in part" is best suited to a state of probation. Perfect knowledge will constitute the felicity of that state, not of trial, but of reward, where we shall know, even as also we are known. Let the prospect of this blessed state excite our hopes, strengthen our faith, and animate our obedience.

Imperfect, even after our most vigorous researches, is our knowledge of the works of the Creator. Unumiling our offour to disperse the clouds and darkness which surround the throne of his dominion. Battled we find ourselves in every attempt to find out his advable nature, and to pry into those things which belong unto the Lord. But let as not murmur; let us not indulge in more impious distrust. Placed in a state of probation, it is fit for the exercise of our faith and patience, that we should "know only in part." Let us cherish the hope of that blessed period, when " we shall know, even as also we are known;" when God will communicate to us as much of his all-perfect knowledge as our finite facultics can receive; when his works displayed to our admiring view, we shall acknowledge that they are "great and glorious;" when the counsels of his Providence unfolded, we shall know and feel that all his dispensations, however dark and severe, were "just and true;" and when, contemplating with enlarged faculties those truths of religion which now transcend our comprehension, we shall, with devout adoration, behold in all its infinitely merciful and gracious proper-

D d

Yes—we shall "know, even as also we are known." We shall know "God the judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the Covenant, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect"—we shall be united to them, and with them shout forth the ceaseless song of praise—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever "."

But who shall inherit these blessed promises—who shall come to this glorious fruition of the knowledge and glory of God? Those only who follow "in the way of God's law, and the works of his commandments," and through the renovating operations of his Spirit, conformed to his image of purity and truth, are made meet for the enjoyment of that presence—for which the unbelieving and the unholy are disqualified, and from which, in the nature of things, as by the decree of Divine Justice, they must be excluded. On them is pronounced—banishment from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Increase then, our faith, O our God, in the truths of thy word! Grant us patience to run with humility the race which is set before us,

¹ Heb. xii. 23.

m Rev. v. 13.

and strength to walk in thy commandments and ordinances blameless—that when we leave this imperfect and sinful world, where we "know only in part," we may enter on that glorious state where "we shall know, even as also we are known."



THE STATE OF THE DEPARTED

SET FORTH IN

A FUNERAL ADDRESS,

DELIVERED

At the Interment

OF THE

RIGHT REV. BENJAMIN MOORE, D.D.

BISHOP OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK, AND RECTOR OF TRINITY CHURCH, IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

On FRIDAY, the 1st Day of March, 1816, IN TRINITY CHURCH, IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

AND

AN APPENDIX.

This Address, with the Appendix, was first published in New York, in 1816. They are annexed, as more fully explaining and establishing the Doctrine relative to the State of the Departed, considered in the Sermon in the first Volume, entitled, "Christ preaching to the Spirits in Prison."

THE STATE OF THE DEPARTED.

SET FORTH IN

A FUNERAL ADDRESS.

&c. &c.

PEOPLE of the congregation! the remains of your Pastor lie before you—the beloved Pastor who so long fed you with the bread of life, and whose accents of persuasion you have so often heard in this sacred place.

My brethren of the Episcopal clergy—we have long mourned the living death of our spiritual Father—his sufferings are terminated—he is at rest.

When we contemplate that venerated corpse, it is natural to inquire,

What has become of the spirit which so recently inhabited it?

What will become of that tabernacle of clay which this spirit has deserted?

Christian believers, these are inquiries deeply interesting to you. Soon each one of you will be, as he whose remains you now behold.

What becomes of the spirit of the believer when it leaves its tabernacle of clay?

Does it sink into annihilation? We must subdue all those feelings which constitute the perfection and happiness of our nature, before we can contemplate the extinction of being but with horror. There is not a power of his soul which man does not shudder at the thought of losingnot a virtuous enjoyment which he does not wish to carry with him beyond the grave-not an acquisition that ennobles or adorns him which he would not impress with the seal of eternity. The voice of the Creator speaks in the soul of the being whom he has made, and inspires the hope that he is immortal. But, alas! that voice is only faint and feeble. Immortality, an unmerited gift to a fallen creature, must be assured by the express promise of him who alone can bestow it. The word of the Author of our being must be the pledge, that this being shall not be extinguished.

Blessed be God—this word we have—God hath spoken—"The spirit shall return to him who gave it."

This, believer, is thy confidence and thy re-

joicing. Thy spirit returns to God—to God all glorious and all good; who so loved thee as to give for thee his only begotten Son; and who in the blood of his Son hath sealed the assurance that thou shalt be ever with him. Canst thou doubt whether in his presence thou shalt be happy? Ah—the happiness reserved for thee by thy God, time eye hath not seen, thine ear hath not heard, and thy heart cannot conceive. But

When does the spirit enter on this state of complete felicity?

There cannot be a moment's doubt, that departed saints do not enter on the full fruition of bliss, immediately on their release from the body. In what does this fulness of bliss consist? In the union of the purified spirit with the glorified body. But until the voice of the Son of God calls to the corruptible to put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality, that body is confined to the tomb, embraced by corruption, mingled with the dust. Admission to heaven, the place of the vast universe of God, where the vision of his glory more immediately displayed, shall constitute the eternal felicity of the redeemed, does not take place according to the sacred writings, until the judgment at the great day; when the body, raised incorruptible and

glorious, shall be united to the soul, purified and happy. While the soul is separate from the body, and absent from that heaven which is to be her eternal abode, she cannot have attained the perfection of her bliss.

Will the privileges of believers be greater than those of their divine Head? His glory in heaven consists in the exaltation of his human nature of his glorified body in union with his perfect spirit. But in the interval between his death and his resurrection, his body was embalmed by his disciples, washed with their tears, and guarded in the sepulchre by his enemies. His spirit therefore was not in heaven until he ascended there after his resurrection. "Touch me not," said he to Mary Magdalen, when he had risen from the dead, "for I have not yet ascended to your Father and my Father, to your God and my God a." Our blessed Lord in his human nature was not in heaven until after his resurrection. And will a privilege be conferred on the members which was not enjoyed by the Head? "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise," was his language to the penitent thief associated with him at his crucifixion—in Paradise, not in heaven; for the happiness of heaven supposes the happiness of the whole man, of his soul united to his body. But on that day in

which the Saviour assured the penitent subject of his mercy that he should be with him in Paradise, the body of the one was consigned to corruption, and the body of the other to the tomb.

What then is the state of the soul in the period between death and the resurrection—between her separation from the body and her reunion with it—between her release from this her state of exile, and her admission to final and complete felicity in her eternal home?

Is she in a state of unconsciousness? All probability is against the supposition. Consciousness seems a necessary attribute of spirit in a disembodied state. The temporary suspension of consciousness in the present life arises from that union of the soul with the body, which in many cases controls, and changes, and suspends her operations.

But a state of unconsciousness is a state of oblivion—and this must be an object of aversion to the happy spirit. In the present life indeed there is often an oblivion of care that corrodes, of adversity that wounds the spirit—or that which, from the connection of the body with the soul, is necessary to the renewed exertion of its powers, and to renewed enjoyment. But when the soul, with her mortal tabernacle, has shaken off her sins and sorrows, this oblivion

cannot be necessary; it must interrupt her enjoyment—it cannot therefore be assigned her in a state which, her probation being finished, is a state of reward and of bliss.

But, on this as on every other point connected with our spiritual interests, we are not left to speculation, and to a balance of probabilities. What was the language of our blessed Lord to his penitent companion on the cross!--" This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." But would this have been the language of consolation, of hope, of triumph, if Paradise be a state of oblivion! Or can we for a moment indulge the idea, that the human soul of the blessed Jesus, sunk at death into a state of forgetfulness, which reduced it to a level with the body that was sleeping in the sepulchre? No-Ilis soul was actively engaged—engaged in prosecuting that gracious scheme of redemption which occupied his life, which engrossed his last moments of agony, and which he relinquished not even with death. He "went," says the apostle b. "and preached to the spirits in prison," to the spirits in safe keeping, "to the sometime disobedient," but finally penitent antediluvians "in the days of Noah," who, though they were swept off in the deluge of waters, found, through the merits of the Lamb slain from the beginning of the

^b 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20.

world, a refuge from the flames of Tophet, from the surges of the burning lake. While his body was reposing in the grave, he went in his spirit and "preached," or (as the word signifies) proclaimed, the glad tidings, to the souls of the departed saints, of that victory over death which the Messiah in whom they trusted was to achieve, and of that final redemption of the body and resurrection to glory, the hope of which constituted their enjoyment in the place of the departed*.

* The above is the interpretation of this very obscure passage, which is advanced and maintained with great ingenuity, force and erudition by Bishop Horsley in his Sermon on "Christ's descent into Hell." This interpretation gives no sanction, as Bishop Horsley justly observes, to the doctrine of purgatory. Purgatory is considered as a place of punishment and purification for those who hie under the gulb of sins of infirmity, from which they are delivered either when they have been sufficiently purified by suffering purgatorial pains, or by the efficacy of the masses which are said for them. There is no foundation for this doctrine in Scripture. At death the couls of the righteous and of the wicked go to a state the one of happiness and the other of misery, in the place of the departed; and there is no change in their state except what arises from the complete consumnation, in body as well as soul, of the happiness of the one in Heaven, and the misery of the other in (γέεννα) Hell.

Christ proclaimed, to the spirits in prison, in a state of sectusion and separation, or as the word may be translated, in safe heeping, the glad tidings of his victory over death, of their final resurrection to glory. Were they previously in doubt as to these events—a doubt which must have been incompatible with

Could God, who is "the God of the living" only, be styled emphatically "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," if their departed spirits did not live to him in a state of consciousness and enjoyment"? Did the Holy Apostle, who in labours, and in sufferings died daily, and who daily was renewed by the hope of the glory prepared for him, look forward to a state of unconsciousness after death, when he desired to "depart and to be with Christ," to be "absent from the body and present with the Lord?"

their happiness? By no means. They died in the faith that the Messiah was to achieve this victory; and in this faith their spirits rejoiced. But Christ when he descended to them changed their faith in this event as future, into faith in it as actually accomplished—and he thus confirmed the glorious hopes which they already enjoyed.

But why are the antediluvians, those who were "sometime disobedient," but afterwards [became penitent "in the days of Noah," selected as the peculiar objects of the Saviour's preaching? "To this I can only answer," (says Bishop Horsley,) "that I think I have observed in some parts of Scripture an anxiety, if the expression may be allowed, to convey distinct intimations, that the antediluvian soul is not uninterested in the redemption and the final retribution."

But for full answer on this point and on many other inquiries connected with this subject, the reader is referred to Bishop Horsley's Sermon on Christ's descent into Hell, published at the end of his new translation of Hosea, and in the volumes of his sermons.

c Matt. xxii. 32.

No-believer - when thy soul departs from the body she does not pass into that state of utter forgetfulness, which, even in the present scene of sin and woe, thou dost dread as the greatest evil with which thou canst be visited. Thou wilt go to a place of enjoyment—characterized as the bosom of Abraham; because there thou wilt be blessed with the company of this Father of the Faithful, of Patriarchs and Prophets, who are all waiting their consummation, the redemption of the body. Thou wilt go to Paradise—to that place separate and invisible—but where thou shalt be with Christ, and be present with the Lord; anticipating in constant desire, in rapturous hope, the resurrection at the last day. Then he who holds the keys of death and Hell shall say to thy spirit-Go forth-be clothed upon with an house that is from Heaven; enter into the joy of thy Lord; inherit a kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world.

Yes—my fellow Christians—this is the joyful confidence with which we can meet the interesting inquiry—

What will become of the body when it is deserted by the spirit that animates it?

What can reason teach us here. She may indeed by analogy illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the resurrection when it is revealed—

But as an original truth, she knew nothing of it. The tomb received, in its dark embrace, the mouldering body; and there was no light that dawned on the night of the grave. "Blessed then be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath begetten us to a tively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ that slepte" - and at the great harvest at the last day, "those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"--The body, sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption—sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory-sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power—sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body—Blessed, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us to this lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

How is all this to be effected? By that mighty power which raised up Christ from the dead. Here we take our stand—on the omnipotence of God—and defy every attack against the doctrine of the resurrection. We laugh to scorn all attempts to wrest from us our hope, through a supposed impossibility of the resurrection, as puny struggles against the omnipotence of God. Did he not at first construct a human form from the

d 1 Peter i. 3. c 1 Cor. xv. 20. f 1 Thess. iv. 14.

dust of the earth? Did he not breathe into a mass of clay the breath of life? And when he again speaks, shall it not be done? Can he not again bring bone to its bone, sinew to its sinew, flesh to its flesh? Fear not, Christian! thy dust may be scattered to the winds of Heaven—But thy God is there. It may repose in the lowest abysses of the grave—He is there. It may dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea—Even there his hand shall lead thee, his right hand shall hold thee, and bring thee forth, incorruptible and glorious, like unto that body which now receives the homage of the angels around the throne. Fear not—thy Redeemer is almighty; and thou shalt be raised at the last day.

Let us comfort one another with these words.

Our venerable Father has gone. In the bosom of Abraham, in the paradise of God, in the custody of the Lord Jesus, his soul reposes; waiting in peace and joy its "perfect consummation and bliss in God's eternal and everlasting glory." Soon the sentence that sin has brought on the whole human race is to be pronounced on the revered remains before us—"Earth to Earth—Ashes to Ashes—Dust to Dust—"

But, he lives with us in the memory of his virtues. Let us recall and cherish them. Let us keep him a little longer with us—not as of late when languishing under disease he gradually lost that engaging expression which had so emi-

E e

nently characterised him, until he at last sunk in the darkness of death — But let us view him such as you, people of the congregation, beheld him, when he appeared among you as your Pastor—such as we, my brethren, beheld him, when he exercised over us his paternal authority.

I should indeed violate that simplicity which in a high degree adorned him, if I were to indulge in the language of inflated panegyric. Simplicity was his distinguishing virtue. He was unaffected—in his tempers, in his actions, in every look and gesture. Simplicity, which throws such a charm over talents, such a lustre over station, and even a celestial loveliness over piety itself, gave its insinuating colouring to the talents, the station and the piety of our venerable Father. But it was a simplicity accompanied with uniform prudence, and with an accurate knowledge of human nature.

A grace allied to simplicity, was the meekness that adorned him—a meekness which was "not easily provoked"—never made an opressive display of talents, of learning or of station—and condescended to the most ignorant and humble, and won their confidence; while associated with dignity, it commanded respect and excited affection, in the circles of rank and affluence. And it was a meekness that pursued the dictates of duty, with firmness and perseverance.

His piety arising from a lively faith in the Redeemer whom he served, and whose grace he was commissioned to deliver, warmed as it was by his feelings, was ever under the control of sober judgment. A strong evidence of its sincerity was, its entire freedom from every thing like ostentation. It did not proclaim itself at the corners of the streets—it did not make boastful pretensions, or obtrude itself on the public gaze—but it was displayed in every domestic, every social, every public relation. It was not the irregular meteor, glittering for a moment, and then sinking in the darkness, from which it was elicited; but the screne and steady light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

He rose to public confidence and respect, and to general esteem solely by the force of talents and worth. In the retirement of a country village, the place of his nativity, he commenced his literary career, and he prosecuted it in the public seminary of this city, and subsequently in his private studies, until he became the finished Scholar and the well furnished Divine.

This city was the only scene of his parochial labours. Here he commenced and here he has closed his ministerial life.

^{*} Bishop Moore was born Oct. 5, 1748, at Newtown, Long Island. He went to school in Newtown, and afterwards in New-York, in order to prepare for entering King's (now Columbia) College, where he graduated.

People of the congregation—You have seen him, regular and fervent, yet modest and humble, in performing the services of the sanctuary. You cannot have forgotten that voice

He pursued his studies, after he graduated, at Newtown, under the direction of Dr. Auchmuty, Rector of Trinity Church; and he was engaged some years in teaching Latin and Greek to the sons of several gentlemen in New York.

He went to England in May 1774; was ordained *Deacov* Friday June 24, 1774, in the chapel of the Episcopal palace at Fulham, by Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, and *Priest* Wednesday, June 29, 1773, in the same place by the same Bishop.

After his return from England he officiated in Trinity Church and its Chapels, and was appointed with the Rev. Mr. Bowden (now Dr. Bowden, of Columbia College) an assistant Minister of Trinity Church; Dr. Auchmuty being Rector, and afterwards Dr. Inglis, since Bishop of Nova Scotia.

On the resignation of Bishop Provoost, Dr. Moore was appointed Rector of Trinity Church, Dec. 22. 1800. He was unanimously elected Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the state of New York, at a special Convention, in the city of New York, Sept. 5, 1801; and was consecrated Bishop at Trenton, New Jersey, in St. Michael's Church, Friday Sept. 11, 1801, by the Right Rev. Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, Presiding Bishop, the Right Rev. Bishop Clagget, of Maryland, and the Right Rev. Bishop Jarvis, of Connecticut.

He was attacked by a Paralysis, in Feb. 1811; and for the last two or three years repeated attacks gradually weakened and disabled him, until he expired, at his residence at Greenwich, near New York, on Tuesday evening, the 27th of Feb. 1816, in the 60th year of his age. The duties of the episcopal office in this diocese have been discharged by the Author of this Address as Assistant Bishop, since his consecration in May, 1811. [1816, and after the decease of Bishop Moore he became the Bishop of the diocese.]

of sweetness, and of melody, yet of gravity and solemnity, with which he excited while he chastened your devotions, nor that evangelical eloquence which, gentle as the dew of Hermon, insinuated itself into your hearts.

His love for the Church was the paramount principle that animated him. He entered on her service in the time of trouble. Steady in his principles yet mild and prudent in advocating them, while he never sacrificed consistency, he never provoked resentment. In proportion as adversity pressed upon the Church, was the firmness of the affection with which he clung to her. And he lived until he saw her, in no inconsiderable degree by his counsel and exertions, raised from the dust and putting on the garments of glory and beauty.

It was this affection for the Church which animated his episcopal labours—which led him to leave that family whom he so tenderly loved, and that retirement which was so dear to him, and where he found while he conferred enjoyment, and to seek in remote parts of the diocese for the sheep of Christ's fold. I know that his memory lives where I have traced the fruits of his labours.

My brethren of the Episcopal Clergy—I need not tell you, how much prudence, gentleness and affection distinguished his episcopal relation to you.

We are not without many recent monitions of that summons which we shall all receive—Give an account of thy stewardship. A Presbyter whose worth and usefulness, from his vicinity to us, are well known, has been recently taken from us!. But a few months since and this temple witnessed your attendance on the last solemn offices of a venerable Father. The remains of another are now before us. With the exception of one h to whom we still look with reverence, who was the companion of his youth, the associate of his early labours, and the sympathising friend of his old age, he is the last in this diocese of those venerable men who derived their ordination from the Parent Church, and whose characters are marked by attachment to evangelical truth in connection with primitive order. My brethren-let not their principles descend with them to the grave. Soon our course will be finished; our account will at the great day be demanded; and how awful the responsibility of those to whom Christ hath entrusted the charge of "the sheep for whom he shed his blood, of the congregation which is his spouse and body."

The Rev. Elias Cooper, Rector of Saint John's Church, Yonkers.

⁵ The Right Rev. Bishop Provoost.

h The Rev. Dr. Bowden.

People whom I see before me—you have an account to render—an account of the use which you have made of your talents, your time, your privileges; of the means of grace and salvation. Animating is the reflection that to the servant who faithfully employs the talents entrusted to him, there is a resurrection of life. But let us remember—Blessed Jesus—let us remember, and by a living faith lay hold on thee as our refuge—thou hast declared there is the resurrection of damnation.



APPENDIX.

ON

THE STATE OF DEPARTED SPIRITS,

AND THE

DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HELL.

THE Author of the preceding Address having been naturally led, in the consideration of the inquiry concerning the condition of the soul after its departure from the body, to introduce the doctrine of a separate state between death and the resurrection, it seems proper more fully to explain and establish the sentiments advanced on this subject.

He has reason to believe that the doctrine is not generally understood; and that therefore it is regarded by many as a doctrine of little importance and of curious speculation only; and by others as a dangerous novelty, nearly allied to the tenets concerning purgatory held by the Church of Rome.

It shall therefore be its object to shew,

- I. That it is a doctrine of the Church of England, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church.
 - II. That it may be traced to the Apostolic age. And
 - III. That it is clearly revealed in the Sacred writings.

The doctrine is—That the souls of men do not go immediately to *Heaven* the place of final bliss, nor to *Hell* the

place of final torment, but remain in a state of enjoyment or misery in the place of the departed until the resurrection at the last day; when, their bodies being united to their souls, they are advanced to complete felicity or woe in Heaven or Hell †.

I. This is a doctrine of the Church of England, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

In the rubric before the Apostles' Creed, in the American Liturgy, it is stated that the words "He went into the place of departed Spirits," are considered as words of the same meaning with "He descended into Hell."

In the prayer for Christ's Church militant in the communion service, we are taught to beseech God that "we with all those who have departed this life in his faith and fear may be partakers of his heavenly kingdom." The happiness of heaven is here considered as a future event in respect to those departed, as well as to ourselves.

In like manner, in the prayers of the burial service, we beseech Almighty God that "we with all those who are departed in the true faith of his holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory." The faithful who are departed have not yet their perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul.

II. This doctrine has been maintained by a series of Protestant Divines eminent for learning and piety, and may be traced to the Apostolic age.

Dr. CAMPBELL, of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and formerly Principal of Marischal College, Aber-

^{*} Styled in the New Testament $\ddot{a}\delta\eta_{\mathcal{L}}$, hades, or Hell; in the sense of an invisible place.

[†] Styled y'serva, gehenna, also in the New Testament translated Hell, denoting a place of torment.

deen, in a very learned dissertation prefixed to his "translation of the four Gospels" on the words "2015 and 75272," maintains and vindicates this doctrine of an intermediate state. His arguments on this point are full, clear, forcible and conclusive.

Dr. MACKNIGHT of the same Church, the Author of a Harmony of the Gospels, and of a New translation of the Epistles with a Commentary and Notes, in various parts of the latter work maintains, that the righteous do not enter on the bliss of Heaven until the final judgment, and of course that they must, in the interval, abide in a separate place. In a note on Hebrews xi. 40. he observes, "The apostle's doctrine, that believers are all to be rewarded together, and at the same time, is agreeable to Christ's declaration, who told his disciples that they "were not to come to the place he was going away to prepare for them, till he returned from heaven" to carry them to it. John xiv. 3. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."—Farther, that the righteous are not to be rewarded till the end of the world, is evident from Christ's words, Matth. xiii. 40. 43.—In like manner, St. Peter hath told us, that the righteous are to be made glad with their reward, at the revelation of Christ, 1 Peter iv. 13. when they are to receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away, 1 Peter v. 4.—John also tells us, That when he shall appear, we shall be made like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. See Whithy's note on 2 Tim. iv. S .- This determination, not to reward the ancients without us, is highly proper: because the power and veracity of God will be more illustriously displayed in the view of angels and men, by raising the whole of Abraham's seed from the dead at once, and by introducing them into the heavenly country in a body,

after a public acquittal at the judgment, than if each were made perfect separately at their death.

If the righteous are not to be rewarded till the end of the world with the glories of heaven, their spirits must remain before that event in some separate place.

Dr. Doddridge in several passages of his commentary, shews his belief in this doctrine *. He paraphrases the text (Acts ii. 27.) "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell"—thus—"Thou wilt not leave my soul while separated from the body, in the unseen world." And in a note observes, that "adms, (hades) is generally put for the state of separate spirits," into which he considers that Christ descended.

In a note of Ridgeley's body of Divinity, the American Editor, the Rev. Dr. James P. Wilson, of the Presbyterian Church states, very correctly, that the Hebrew and Greek words translated Hell in the passage, "thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell" (Ps. xvi. Acts ii.) "are each taken for the invisible world or separate state of the good as well as evil both in the Old and New Testaments; and this was thought by Jews and Gentiles to be under the surface." Christ's descent into Hell, he observes, therefore, means that "his soul when separated from his body, was immediately with the separate spirits who are happy, and so said to be in Paradise. But whether above or below the surface is unimportant+."

It is evident from his commentary on Matth. xi. 23, and on Acts ii. 27. that Dr. Adam Clarke considers that there is a separate place of departed spirits.

There is no doubt that the Rev. John Wesley, the founder of the sect of which Dr. Clarke is so distinguished a

^{*} Notes on Heb. xi. 40. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

[†] Ridgeley's Body of Divinity, Am. Ed. Vol. ii. p. 440, 441, note.

Cergyman, maintains this opinion. In his "Notes upon the New Testament," on Acts ii, 27. Rev. i. 18. vi. 8. Rev. xx. 13, 14. he unequivocally avows it. On Rev. i. 18. "I have the keys of hell and of death," he observes—"that is, the invisible world; the body abides in death, and the soul in hades." Rev. xx. 14. "And death and Hell gave up the dead that were in them" he explains "Death gave up all the bodies of men, and hades (hell) the receptacle of separate souls, gave them up to be reunited to their bodies."

Of the Protestant Episcopal Church—there is a sermon of the late Bishop SEABURY, of Connecticutt, on "Christ's descent into Hell," in which the principal arguments in support of the existence of a separate place of departed spirits are clearly and concisely exhibited.

In his lectures on the Catechism (page 36) Bishop WHITE, of Pennsylvania, observes, "It comes in the way in this place to notice a very common error which has even crept into the public confessions of some churches; as if the beatific vision of holy persons, or their being in heaven, took place on the dissolution of the body. This is not scriptural. Doubtless such persons are in peace, in some state answering to the figurative terms of 'Paradise,' and 'Abraham's bosom;' with a measure of bliss, answering to what St. Paul must have implied, when he spoke of 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' Still, they have not yet reached the state intimated by the same Apostle, where he speaks of being 'clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' And the sentiment here expressed is sustained by our Church, as in many places, so especially when she prays in the burial service, for 'perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul.' But she no where speaks of passing immediately from this world to Heaven."

Of the Church of England,—the present Bishop of Lincoln*, Dr. Tomline (formerly Pretyman) in his exposition of the 3d article concerning Christ's descent into Hell, considers that by this is meant "that in the intermediate time" between his death and his resurrection "his soul went into the common receptacle of departed spirits."

Dr. Scott in his Family Bible, in his commentary on the 16th Psalm, verse 10. and on Acts ii. 27. speaks without hesitation of a separate place of departed spirits between death and the resurrection.

Dr. MAGEE+, the celebrated author of "Discourses and Dissertations on the Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice," in a very learned note (p. 346, &c.) of that work, maintains the existence of a region of departed spirits—of an intermediate state of the soul between its departure from this world and some future state of its being.

This doctrine is maintained with his usual acumen, force and erudition by Bishop Horsley, in the sermon quoted in the preceding address, on Christ's descent into Hell. In this sermon he maintains the position that Christ" descended to Hell properly so called, to the invisible mansion of departed spirits, and to that part of it where the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity \(\frac{1}{2}\)." In the notes on his commentary on Hosea, the same doctrine is advanced.

The eloquent and pious Bishop Horne in his commentary on the 10th verse of the 16th Psalm, maintains the doctrine of the place of departed spirits. "Although our mortal part must see corruption, yet it shall not be finally left under the power of the enemy but shall be raised

^{*} Now Bishop of Winchester, 1824.

[†] Now Archbishop of Dublin, 1824.

again and reunited to its old companion the soul, which exists meanwhile in secret and undiscernable regions, there waiting for the day when its Redeemer shall triumph over corruption in his mystical as he has already done in his natural body."

Archbishop Secker in his lectures on the Catechism (lect. 9.) explaining the descent into Hell, observes, "the most common meaning, not only among heathers, but Jews and the first Christians, of the word Hades, here translated Hell, was in general that invisible world, one part or another of which, the souls of the deceased, whether good or bad inhabit." "In what part of space, or of what nature that receptacle is, in which the souls of men continue from their death till they rise again, we scarce know at all; excepting that we are sure it is divided into two extremely different regions, the dwelling of the righteous, called in St. Luke Abraham's bosom, where Lazarus was; and that of the wicked, where the rich man was; between which there is a great gulph fixed. And we have no proof that our Saviour went on any account into the latter; but since he told the penitent thief that he should be that day with him in paradise; we are certain he was in the former; where they, which die in the Lord, rest from their labours, and are blessed; waiting for a still more perfect happiness at the resurrection of the last day."

The acute and learned "Author of the Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion," Dr. Samuel CLARKE, Rector of St. James, Westminster, in his "Exposition of the Church Catechism," explains the word Hell in the Creed to mean "the invisible state of departed souls."

Sir Peter King in his "Critical History of the Apostles' Creed," proves, at some length, and with great clearness and force, the existence of a place of departed spirits,

into which Christ descended, in the interval between his death and his resurrection.

Among the Sermons of the famous Bishop Bull, the learned Author of the Defence of the Nicene Faith, is a Sermon on "the middle state of happiness or misery," which he explains and defends in the following terms-"The souls of all the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss, far exceeding all the felicities of this world, though short of that most consummate perfect beatitude of the Kingdom of Heaven with which they are to be crowned and rewarded in the resurrection. And so on the contrary, the souls of all the wicked are presently after death in a state of very great misery; and yet dreading a far greater misery at the day of judgment *." "All good men without exception are in the whole interval between their death and resurrection. as to their souls, in a very happy condition; but after the resurrection they shall be yet more happy, receiving then their full reward, their perfect consummation of bliss, both in soul and body, the most perfect bliss they are capable of, according to the divers degrees of virtue through the grace of God on their endeavours, attained by them in this life. On the other side, all the wicked as soon as they die are very miserable as to their souls; and shall be yet far more miserable both in soul and body, after the day of judgment, proportionably to the measure of sins committed by them here on earth. This is the plain doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Church of Christ in its first and best ages, and this we may trust to +."

Bishop Newton, the author of the "Dissertations on the Prophecies," maintains, at considerable length, in a

^{*} Bishop Bull's Works, Vol. i.p. 102, 103.

[†] Ibid. Vol. i. p. 126, 127.

dissertation in the 6th volume of his works, this doctrine of an intermediate state.

Bishop Pearson, in his "Commentary on the Creed," (Art. 5.) observes "As the sepulchre is appointed for our flesh, so there is another receptacle, or habitation, or mansion for our spirits. From whence it followeth that in death, the soul doth certainly pass by a real motion from that place in which it did inform the body, and is translated to that place, and unto that society, which God of his mercy or justice hath allotted to it." "It will appear to have been the general judgment of the Church, that the soul of Christ, contradistinguished from his body, was truly and really carried into those parts below, where the souls of men before departed were detained; and by such a real translation of his soul, he was truly said to have descended into Hell." "We must confess that the soul of Christ was in Hell, and no Christian can deny it," saith St. Augustine.

Bishop BURNET observes in his "Exposition" of the 3d Article, that "by Hell may be meant the invisible place to which departed souls are carried after their death." And therefore—that by our Saviour's soul descending into Hell is meant "his soul being removed out of his body, and carried to those unseen regions of departed spirits, among whom it continued till his resurrection."

The pious and learned Bishop TAYLOR advances the same doctrine in various parts of his writings. In a sermon at the end of his "worthy communicant," he observes, "In the state of separation, the spirits of good men shall be blessed and happy souls. They have an antepast or taste of their reward; but their great reward itself, their crown of righteousness shall not be yet. The confirmation of the saint's felicity shall be at the resurrection of the dead."

Dr. Whitby, in many parts of his "Commentary," and particularly on 2 Tim. iv. 8. advances many arguments from Scripture to prove that the final and complete happiness of the rightcous does not take place until after the judgment at the great day. He considers the immediate ascent of the soul to Heaven after death, as an heresy contradicted by Scripture, and by the faith of the primitive ages. And he quotes numerous passages from the Fathers to prove that the souls of good men remain till the day of judgment, in a certain place out of Heaven, expecting the day of judgment and retribution.

The learned BINGHAM, in his "Christian Antiquities" (book xv. chap. 3. sec. 16.) observes, that it was the sense of the primitive Church, that "the soul is but in an imperfect state of happiness till the resurrection, when the whole man shall obtain a complete victory over death, and by the last judgment be established in an endless state of consummate happiness and glory."

The same doctrine of the separate state of departed spirits, is advanced by WHEATLEY, the author of the "Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer," and by JORTIN the author of "Notes on Ecclesiastical History," in their Sermons.

Dr. NICHOLLS, in his "Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer," asserts the same doctrine; interpreting the descent into Hell, of Christ's descent into the place of separate souls.

Dr. Wall, in his "History of Infant Baptism," (part 2, chap. 8.) goes at considerable length into a statement of the doctrine of the *intermediate state*, and of the opinions of the Primitive Christians on this point.

Dr. HAMMOND, in his "Annotations" on 2 Tim. i. 16. observes, "It is certain that some measure of bliss which shall at the day of judgment be vouchsafed the saints,

when their bodies and souls shall be reunited, is not till then enjoyed by them."

There can be no doubt that the Primitive Church held this doctrine of the intermediate state. The opinions of the Primitive Fathers are quoted by Bishop Pearson on the Creed; by Whitby on 2 Tim. iv. 8.; by Wall on Infant Baptism, part 2, chap. 8., and by Sir Peter King in his Critical History of the Apostles' Creed. To their works, and particularly to the latter, the inquisitive reader is referred for information on this point.

HI. The doctrine of a place of departed spirits to which the souls of the righteous and the wicked go after death, and where they remain in a state of happiness or misery, expecting their complete felicity or woe in Heaven or Hell (76532), after the resurrection at the last day, is a doctrine of Scripture.

The leading arguments from Scripture have been already alluded to in the preceding address. It will be proper to recapitulate and amplify them.

In reasoning upon this subject the principle will be assumed, that, with the existence of all created spirits, is essentially connected the idea of locality. They must exist in some place. For, as Bishop Horsley observes, (Ser. vol. ii. 89—90) "the soul existing after death, and separated from the body, though of a nature immaterial, must be in some place: for however metaphysicians may talk of place as one of the adjuncts of body, as if nothing but gross sensible body could be limited to a place, to exist with relation to place seems to be one of the incommunicable perfections of the Divine Being; and it is hardly to be conceived that any created spirit, of however high an order, can be without locality, or without such determination of its existence at any given time to

some certain place, that it shall be true to say of it, "Here it is, and not elsewhere."

The following view of the state of the departed is also founded on the principle, that the soul between death and the resurrection, is in a state of consciousness. The contrary supposition is incompatible with the idea of spirit, of which consciousness seems to be an inseparable attribute. It is opposed by the uniform tenor of Scripture. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all the Patriarchs and Saints who are departed, are represented as "living unto God." Of course they must be in a state of conscious enjoyment. Moses and Elias appear to our blessed Lord on the mount of transfiguration, and converse with him. 'The Saviour promised the penitent thief, immediately after death, the reward of bliss with him in Paradise. And the Apostle Paul, blessed with the consolations of the Divine favour, and with the comforts of the Holy Ghost, looked forward to his state after death, when he should "be with Christ, and be present with the Lord, as far better."

The Apostle was not one of those philosophers, who think that the soul cannot exercise its functions, independently of its corporeal companion.

The expression sleep or sleeping so frequently applied in Scripture to the state of the dead, is evidently metaphorical; derived from the resemblance between a dead body and the body of a person asleep. The body is said figuratively to "sleep in the dust of the earth;" expecting a resurrection at that day, when the dead, both small and great, shall be summoned to stand before God. Hence the words cemetery and dormitory from the Greek and Latin words xourdo and dormito to sleep, are applied to the receptacles of the dead.

The comparison between the state of the dead, and a state of sleep, is beautiful and appropriate. Sleep is that

relaxation from the toils and afflictions of life, that short suspension of the powers of corporeal sense and action, which are succeeded by a more vigorous exercise of the animal and intellectual faculties. And so death, releasing us entirely from our conflict with the trials of this mortal existence, and suspending all the corporeal functions, is followed by a reviviscence of our whole nature, in the active delights and unalloyed glories of the heavenly state.

The term sleep, applied to the state of the dead, denotes not unconsciousness, but a freedom from the cares and labours of life; and as it respects the righteous, expresses comfortable enjoyment, rest, security and felicity. It is a phrase by which, in all languages, the state of the dead is denoted. And yet the popular belief among all nations, assigned consciousness and activity to the departed.

In שאול the SHEOL or Hell of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel* the departed Monarchs rise from their thrones to meet and to hail the Kings of Babylon and of Egypt.

In the 20ns, hades, or hell of Homer, Ulysses, having trod "the downward melancholy way," converses with the shade of his mother, and the "forms of warriors slain †." And Virgil represents Æneas, in "faucibus orci ‡," in the jaws of hell, in the entrance of Orcus, or the receptacle of the dead, as encountering "variarum monstra ferarum," "of various forms unnumbered spectres." And having passed the bank "irremeabilis undæ" of the "irremeable flood," he holds converse with the shades of the mighty dead.

^{*} Isa. xiv. 9. Ezek. xxxi, xxxii. † Æncid vi. 273.

____juvat usque morari
Et conferre gradum et veniendi poscere causas *.

" The gladsome ghosts-

" Delight to hover near, and long to know,

" What business brought him to the shades below."

The Jews and the Heathens had no idea of the state of the departed as a state of insensibility and inaction.

There may be a metaphysical difficulty how the soul can exist in an incorporeal state. But does not God, who is a spirit, exert an infinite intelligence and activity, independently of material organs? Did not Jesus, the eternal Word, exist in the spirituality of the Godhead before his incarnation? Does not the Holy Spirit exert his quickening power without the aid of corporeal instruments? Are not angels those ministering spirits ever occupied in fulfilling the commands of the great Creator—And what is there corporeal in them? When we can account how the infinite and eternal persons of the Godhead, and how the countless numbers of angelic spirits act independently of body, we may expect to determine in what mode the soul acts without the aid of corporeal organs.

But can she not thus act? Undoubtedly. Angelic spirits thus exert intelligence and activity. And the soul thus acts in her present state. Abstraction often renders her forgetful of her corporeal companion, and almost independent of bodily functions. While the body is locked in the benumbing embrace of sleep, the soul wakes, the soul is active, the soul dreams. And may there not be dreams in the sleep of death!

"To die, to sleep "To sleep! perchance to dream."

^{*} Æneid vi. 487.

The sleep of the soul after death, in that sense which supposes it to be unconscious, is a modern invention, unknown to the ancient popular creed of both Jews and Heathens, repugnant to reason, and contradicted by Scripture*.

With these principles in view, that the soul exists after death in some place; and that she exists in a state of consciousness; the following are submitted, as conclusive arguments, from Scripture, of the doctrine of the existence of departed spirits in a separate place, denominated Hades or Hell, between death and the resurrection.

- I. The Scriptures uniformly represent that there is but one judgment at the last day, and that the souls of men are not allotted to Heaven or Hell until this final judgment. Previously to that event then the soul must be in some other place. See Matt. xxv. 31, 32. John v. 28, 29. and xii. 48. Acts xxii. 31. Rom. ii. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 1.
- II. The happiness of Heaven and the misery of Hell are represented in Scripture as complete—the happiness or misery both of soul and body. Matt. xxv. 34, 41. 1 Cor. xv. 52, 53, 54. Phil. iii. 20, 21. 1 Thess. iv. 14, &c. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. But until the resurrection at the last day, the body is subject to the embrace of corruption. Previously to the resurrection then, the righteous and the wicked cannot be in Heaven or Hell. They must be in some other place. Their state of happiness or misery must be different from its character in the final Heaven of happiness and Hell of torment.
 - III. The Apostle asserts, that the saints of the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations have not yet arrived to

In the volumes of the Orthodox Churchman's Magazine, published in England, there are several pieces relative to the intermediate state, and the condition of the soul after death.

Testament dispensation, will finally partake. Consequently, they cannot be in Heaven, the place of the final and perfect felicity of the saints. They must be in some separate place, waiting for the perfection of their bliss. "These," says he (the saints of old) "all having obtained a good report by faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect*."

DODDRIDGE refers this perfection, which the saints of old do not yet enjoy, but which they will inherit with us, to the glory of the heavenly state; interpreting the words they without us, might not be made perfect, of God's "purpose of bringing all his children together to the full consummation of their hopes in Christ Jesus his Son, at the time of his final and triumphant appearing †."

WHITBY, in coincidence with the primitive Fathers, also maintains from this text that the souls of the Old Testament saints, as well of those who have died under the Christian dispensation, are "not exalted to the highest heavens;" that they "had not received their full reward, yea, that they were not to expect it till the day of judgment \(\frac{1}{2} \)."

MACKNIGHT, in his Commentary on the Epistles, advances the same sentiment, and refers to the arguments of Whitby as sustaining it §.

Wesley, in his notes on this passage observes, "though they (the Old Testament Saints) obtained a good testimony yet did not receive the great promise, the heavenly inheritance—God having provided some better thing for

^{*} Heb. xi. 39, 40. † Doddridge on Heb. xi. 40.

[†] Whitby on Heb. xi. 40. § Macknight on Heb. xi. 40.

us, namely, everlasting glory 'that they without us should not be made perfect,' that is, that we might all be perfected together in Heaven*."

As therefore, these saints of old who are departed all live to God, for God is "their God," and "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" and as they do not live in that state of final glory in heaven, on which they will not enter until the saints under the Gospel are admitted to it, at the judgment of the great day; it follows, that all departed saints, must live to God in some place separate from heaven, anticipating with joyful hope their final glorification +.

* Wesley on Heb. xi. 40.

† The passage 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, 20. relative to Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison, which was introduced in the preceding address and more particularly explained in a note, is not here adduced in evidence of the existence of a place of departed spirits, because the interpretation given of this passage rests principally on the authority of a single individual. It seems however to the writer that a serious and deliberate perusal of Bishop Horsley's Sermon on this text will lead, in every case, if not to full conviction, to at least very considerable confidence in the correctness of the interpretation of it, which, with great originality, ingenuity, force, and eloquence, he offers and vindicates.

The learned Author of "the Doctrine of the Greek Article," Dr. Middleton (p. 334 of that work) coincides, if not in all the criticisms of Bishop Horsley on this text, at least in some of the most important. Dr. Middleton in terms equally just and cloquent characterises Bishop Horsley. "To various and recondite learning, to nervous and manly cloquence, and to powers of reasoning, which have been rarely equalled, he added a zeal and intrepidity of spirit, which enabled him to prosecute a glorious though an unpopular career in an heretical and apostate age." Middleton on the Greek Art. p. 334.

IV. Another argument for the existence of the departed saints in a separate place is founded on the sentiment avowed in Scripture, that these departed saints have not yet ascended to Heaven. "No man," says our blessed Lord, "hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven *." Enoch and Elijah were translated, according to the foregoing declaration of our Lord, not to that Heaven to which Christ hath ascended, and to which he will finally exalt his saints; but to some separate abode of blessedness and peace. It is indeed said "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven +." But this mode of expression is agreeable to the popular belief that the state of the blessed is in the material heavens. Heaven cannot signify that region, wherever it may be in the immeasurable creation of God, which is the scene of the more particular display of the Divine glory, to which Christ hath ascended, and to which all his saints are, at the resurrection, to be advanced. This construction of the word would make the passage of the inspired historian directly contradict the assertion of our Lord.

Thus also it is said, "David is not yet ascended into the Heavens ‡." His soul, therefore, must abide in some separate region of hope and enjoyment.

The soul then is not in Heaven or in Hell (the final place of torment) until after the day of judgment. The happiness or the misery of Heaven and Hell is the happiness or misery of the whole man both body and soul, which are not united until the last day. The saints of old are in joy and felicity, and yet not in complete happiness, which they will not receive but in company with all

the saints of the Christian dispensation. And these departed saints of old have not yet ascended to Heaven; all these considerations prove that there must be an intermediate state between death and the resurrection, some place distinct from Heaven and Hell (the place of torment) where the souls of the departed abide.

V. This place of the departed is particularly designated in Scripture.

It is the zons, Hades or Hell, into which, agreeably to an article of the Apostles' Creed, our Lord descended in the interval between his death and his resurrection.

The existence of a place called Hell, into which Christ descended, is not only asserted in the Apostles' Creed, but in the 3d Article of our Church—"As Christ died and was buried, so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell." Bishop Horsley observes ", "the terms in which the Reformers in this Article state the proposition, imply that Christ's going down into Hell is a matter of no less importance to be believed than that he died upon the cross for men; is no less a plain matter of fact in the history of our Lord's life and death, than the burial of his dead body."

The doctrine advanced in this Article of the Creed is, that after death, our Lord descended into Hell. This must refer to his soul, for his body reposed in the tomb.

As existence in some place is essential to every created spirit, the soul of Christ, after death, must have had a particular habitation. This could not be Heaven. There is not the least intimation in Scripture that our Lord ascended there, in the interval between his death and his resurrection. On the contrary, his ascension is always considered as taking place after his resurrection, in his

^{*} Ser. vol. ii. 87.

perfect human nature, body as well as soul. In the interval, therefore, between his death and his resurrection, the soul of our blessed Lord must have abided in some other place than Heaven.

There are two texts of Scripture which designate the name of this place.

The language of our Lord to the penitent thief—"This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise *," determines the fact, that the soul of the blessed Jesus after death went to some place, to which, as the habitation of the departed spirits of the righteous, the soul of the penitent thief was also admitted; and this place is called Paradise. A more particular explanation of this term will be given, when the meaning of the general term "Hell," as denoting the place to which our Lord descended, is explained. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell; nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."

This passage of the 16th Psalm is expressly applied by St. Peter (Acts ii. 27.) to our Saviour. According to this prediction, the soul of Christ was to be in Hell. But he was not in Hell before his death, neither was he there after his resurrection. It follows, that in the interval between his death and his resurrection, his soul was in hell.

There is no escaping from this conclusion, but by maintaining, according to the opinion of some Commentators, that the soul here meant is not his rational or spiritual soul, but merely his animal soul or life; that soul in the Old Testament means sometimes a dead body; and that therefore the signification of the passage is, thou wilt not leave my life, my dead body, in the grave; thou wilt raise me from the dead.

^{*} Luke xxiii. 43.

There is no doubt that the words in the Original Hebrew and Greek which are here translated soul, are used for the animal life, or the dead body of a man. But they also denote the rational soul, the soul properly so called.

The word translated soul in the passage as it occurs in the 16th Psalm, is in the original $vec{distar}$, nephesh, answering to the Greek $\Psi v \chi \dot{n}$, (Acts ii. 27.) It occurs Deut. vi. 5. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul" (nephesh.) Here soul is evidently used in the sense of the rational soul, of the soul or mind, properly so called; that principle within us which thinks, and understands, and wills, and exercises the powers, and faculties, and propensities of our nature. The Hebrew word nephesh or soul is used in the same signification in other passages of the Old Testament *.

But our principal concern is with the meaning of the Greek term $\psi v \chi \dot{n}$, corresponding to nephesh. If this is used by the writers of the New Testament, to denote the rational and immortal soul; as St. Peter rendered the Hebrew word (nephesh) by this term; it will follow that he understood soul in this passage of the rational and immortal soul of Christ. The following passage establishes the use of the word $\psi v \chi \dot{n}$, or soul, to denote the rational and immortal part of our nature, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul $(\psi v \chi \dot{n})$; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul $(\psi v \chi \dot{n})$ and body in hell," $(\gamma \dot{\epsilon} \dot{\epsilon} v v \alpha, gehenna, not \ddot{\alpha} \delta n s, Matt. x. 28.)$ that is, to punish in the torments of hell the spiritual and immortal part of man as well as his corporeal nature. It is applied to the human soul or

^{*} Deut. iv. 29. Psalm xxiv. 4, &c.

spirit, as distinguished from his body in other passages of Scripture *.

Since then, the words translated soul are used in the original to denote the spiritual and immortal part of man, we are justified, unless some sufficient reasons are assigned to the contrary, in thus interpreting them, in the passage which speaks of the *soul* of our blessed Lord not being left in hell.

There are the most decisive reasons to justify this interpretation. For

- 1. If the soul in this passage does not mean the spiritual and immortal part of man, but is synonymous with animal life or dead body, the obvious meaning of the passage, as referring to the two distinct parts of the human
- * Matt. xi. 29. Matt. xxvi. 38. John xii. 27. Schleusner observes (Lex. art. $\psi v \chi \dot{\eta}$ 6.) that the words translated heart and mind, spirit and soul, are often joined without reference to any subtle distinction in their meaning. Stockius gives animus, the rational and intelligent soul, as one acceptation of the word $\psi v \chi \dot{\eta}$.

Homer uses $\psi v\chi \eta$ to denote that part of man which remains after death. Thus, in his Odyssey (book xi. 536, 539.) where Ulysses describes his visit to the infernal regions " $\psi v\chi \eta$ Alakíðao," anima Æacidæ, or as we would say, the soul of Achilles; and " $\psi v\chi \alpha i$ verpvõv," anima mortuorum, the souls of the dead, are the terms by which the dead are distinguished. Virgil uses the term anima corresponding to $\psi v\chi \eta$ in the same sense. Thus, (Æn. vi. 264.) "imperium animarum," the empire of Ghosts, or, as we would say, of departed souls. "Quidve petunt anima," What do the Ghosts desire? or, as we would say, What do the departed souls desire?

 $\Psi v \chi \eta$ is applied to the spiritual and immortal part of man, by the Greek Fathers. Suicer in his Thesaurus states that this word is employed by them in its proper signification to denote the rational soul, the most noble and excellent part of man, spiritual and immortal. He quotes numerous examples of this signification of the word from the Greek Fathers.

nature of Christ, is lost. The last clause of the passage is not a repetition of the former; there is an opposition between them so far as that they convey distinct meanings, and refer to different things. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." But if soul refers to the dead body, or to the animal life, the force of the passage is entirely lost. If this were the sense of the words, as Bishop BURNET observes*, "there will be no opposition in the two parts of this period; the one will be only a redundant repetition of the other. Therefore it is much more natural to think, that this other branch concerning Christ's soul being left in hell, must relate to that which we commonly understand by soul." If then his "soul was not left in hell, from thence it plainly follows, that once it was in helf, and by consequence that Christ's soul descended into Hell." Bishop BURNET considers this text as "unquestionable authority that our Saviour's soul was in Hell."

KING in his "history of the Apostles' Creed" gives the same application to the word soul; observing, "Although the word soul may, by a metonymy, be taken in Scripture for the body, yet it cannot be so understood when it is placed in opposition to and contradistinction from it, as in this text it is \tau."

2. According to the interpretation which is here opposed, there is no account given of the soul of Christ, in the interval between his death and his resurrection—the whole passage merely affirms the condition of his body. But if the former clause of the passage be interpreted of

^{*} Exposition of the Articles, Art. iii. † History of the Apostles' Creed, Art. Descent into Hell.

the soul or spiritual part of the human nature of Christ, as the latter undoubtedly is of his body, there is then a full account of the condition of both parts of his nature. His soul was in hell, but not left there—his body in the grave, but did not see corruption.

- 3. It is evident, that some part of the human nature of the blessed Jesus called his soul, was to be left in some place called Hell. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." His body was to be in the grave, but was not to see corruption; his soul was not to be left in hell. But if soul means merely his animal life, this not being a distinct subsistence, there was no part of his nature in hell. Soul must therefore refer to some distinct part of the human nature of our blessed Lord, which was not left in hell. The term soul (ψυχή) cannot mean his body; it cannot mean his animal life which was no distinct subsistence; it must mean his soul properly so called, the spiritual and immortal part of his human nature. This, his soul properly so called, was in hell, but was not left there.
- 4. This passage was understood of the descent of the rational and intellectual soul of Christ into hell, by the primitive Church. Bishop Pearson in his learned work on the Creed, observes *, that it was "the general judgment of the Church that the soul of Christ contradistinguished from his body, that better and more noble part of his humanity, his rational and intellectual soul, after a true and proper separation from his flesh, was really and truly carried into those parts below, where the souls of men before departed were detained; and by such a real translation of his soul, he was truly said to have descended into Hell." There is nothing in which the Fathers more

^{*} On the Creed, Art. Descent into Hell.

agreed than this, a real descent of the soul of Christ unto the habitation of the souls departed. The persons to whom, and end for which, he descended, they differ in; but as to a local descent into the infernal parts, they all agree." Referring to the passage under consideration, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell," Bishop Pearson does not hesitate to observe, "From this place, the article (of the descent into hell) is clearly and infallibly deduced thus: If the soul of Christ were not left in hell at his resurrection, then his soul was in hell before his resurrection. But it was not there before his death; therefore upon or after his death, and before his resurrection, the soul of Christ descended into hell; consequently the creed doth truly deliver that Christ being crucified, was dead, buried, and descended into hell. For as his flesh did not see corruption by virtue of that promise and prophetical expression, and yet it was in the grave, the place of corruption, where it rested in hope until his resurrection; so his soul which was not left in hell, by virtue of the like promise or prediction, was in that helf, where it was not left, until the time that it was to be united to the body for the performing of the resurrection. We must therefore confess from hence, that the soul of Christ was in hell; and no Christian can deny it, saith St. Augustin, it is so clearly delivered in this prophecy of the Psalmist, and application of the Apostle *."

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^{*} Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. He descended into Hell, Oxford Edit. 1797, 358—360. This Article, He descended into Hell, was not introduced into the Creed, until about three bundred years after Christ. But it will not follow that Christ's descent into hell was not previously a doctrine of the Church. On the contrary, the Fathers from the early ages, maintained this opinion, as Bishop Pearson observes, who quotes at length their opinions. The clause was first introduced into the creed of the Church of Aquileia, in which there

Sir Peter King * gives the same view of the opinion of the Primitive Fathers, "They apply this action of our Saviour's to his soul alone, employing for this end that text of the Apostie cited by him from the Psalmist, on which this Article is principally founded (Acts ii. 27.) By the soul of Christ which God would not leave in Hell, they understood the rational part of man, that spirit which distinguishes him from a brate, and subsists after its disunion and departure from the body.

5. It may be observed—That by denying, that the descent of Christ into Hell in this passage is meant of the descent of his soul properly so called, we give up the principal argument from Scripture of the existence of the human soul of Christ. Apollinaris, an early heretic, denied to Christ an intellectual or rational soul, the place of which was supplied, he said, by the Word, or Divinity. Against this heresy, the orthodox urged the text relative

was no mention of Christ's burial. It would not hence follow, that these words referred solely to the burial of Christ's body. Since his "descent into hell," necessarily denoting the descent of his body into the grave, might also imply the descent of his soul into Hades or Hell. As Bishop Pearson observes, "Although they were first put into the Aquiliean Creed to signify the burial of Christ, and those which had only the burial in their creed, did confess as much as those which without the burial did express the descent; yet since the Roman Creed hath added the descent unto the burial, and expressed that descent by words signifying more properly Hell, it cannot be imagined that the Creed as it now stands should signify only the burial of Christ by his descent into Hell," "The ancient Church did certainly believe that Christ did some other way descend beside his burial; Ruffinus himself (an ecclesiastical writer) though he interpreted those words of the burial only, yet in the relation of what was done at our Saviour's death, makes mention of his descent into Hell beside, and distinct from his sepulture; and those, who in after ages, added it to the burial, did actually believe that the soul of Christ descended."

^{*} History of the Apostles' Creed, Descent into Hell.

to Christ, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." Christ's descent into Hell, they considered as an undeniable proof that he had a reasonable soul. For it could not be his deity that descended into hell; that being omnipresent was incapable of any local transition. It could not be his body; for that was committed to the tomb. It must have been his reasonable, human soul, which descended there, since there is no evidence of the existence after death of the animal or sensitive part of our nature which we have in common with the brutes. To maintain then, that the text "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" is meant of the sensitive nature, the animal life of Christ, subverts entirely the principal argument in favour of the reality of his reasonable soul, which the Catholic or universal Church urged against the Apollinarian heresy. As Bishop Pearson in his reasoning on this subject observes, "If it could have been answered by the heretics, as it is now by many, that his descent into hell had no relation to his soul but to his body only which descended into the grave; or that it was not a real but virtual descent, by which his death extended to the destruction of the powers of Hell; or that his soul was not his intellectual spirit or immortal soul, but his living soul which descended into Hell, that is, continued in the state of death; I say, if any of these senses could have been affixed to this Article (the descent into hell) the Apollinarian's answer might have been sound, and the Catholic's argument of no validity. But since those heretics did all acknowledge this article; since the Catholic Fathers did urge the same to prove the real distinction of the soul of Christ both from his divinity and from his body, because his body was really in the grave when his soul was really present with the souls below; it followeth that it was the general doctrine of the Church, that Christ did descend into Hell, by a local motion of his soul

separated from his body to the places below, where the souls of men departed were."

"Nor can it be reasonably objected that the argument of the Fathers was of equal force against these heretics, if it be understood of the animal soul, as it would be if it were understood of the rational; as if these heretics had equally deprived Christ of the rational and animal soul. For it is most certain that they did not deprive Christ of both; but most of the Apollinarians denied an human soul to Christ only in respect to the intellectual part, granting that the animal soul of Christ was of the same nature with the animal soul of other men. If therefore the Fathers had proved only that the animal soul of Christ had descended into Hell, they had brought no argument at all to prove that Christ had an human intellectual soul. It is therefore certain that the Catholic Fathers in their opposition to the Apollinarian heretics did declare that the intellectual and immortal soul of Christ descended into Hell *."

If we deny the descent of the soul of Christ, properly so called, into Hell, we relinquish the principal argument, in favour of the doctrine of the real incarnation of Christ, against the heretics which have assailed it. The Apollinarians and Nestorians denied to Christ a rational soul. They maintained that the two natures in Christ, the divine and the human were not united, but that God dwelt in Christ as his temple, supplying the place of the rational soul. And the Eutychians on the contrary asserted the confusion of natures in Christ; so that there was in him but one nature—the divine. In opposition to these heresies, the true doctrine of the incarnation is, that Jesus Christ is "perfect God and perfect man; of a reasonable soul

^{*} Pearson on the Creed, Vol. 1. p. 359, 360. Oxford Edit. 1797.

and human flesh subsisting; and as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

Bishop Pearson observes*, "The true doctrine of the Incarnation, against all the enemies thereof, Apollinarians, Nestorians, Entychians and the like, was generally expressed by declaring the verity of the soul of Christ really present in Hell, and the verity of his body at the same time really present in the grave."

It appears then, that by considering the passage, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell," as indicating, not the intellectual soul, but the animal soul or life; and not the place of departed spirits, but merely the grave; we shall vary from the belief of the universal Church in the earlier ages, and relinquish the principal argument against many of the most dangerous heresies relative to the person and nature of our blessed Lord.

It was necessary to go into this view of the subject, because it is maintained by many useful and able Commentators and Critics, that this passage merely denotes thou wilt not leave my life in the grave. Dr. Whitby at considerable length maintains this opinion, which is also held by the learned Parkhurst and others. It ought to be observed, however, that Whitby and Parkhurst are strong advocates for an intermediate state; and the former admits that the soul of Christ was in Paradise after his death. "The Scripture doth assure us that the soul of the Holy Jesus being separated from his body, went to Paradise †." (Luke xxiii. 43.)

The opposite construction of this passage as applicable to the descent of the *rational soul* of Christ to hell, is supported by the opinion of the Primitive Fathers and Com-

[†] Whitby's Com. Vol. ii. 267.

mentators; and of modern Critics and Expositors of great name, among whom rank, Bishop Pearson, Bishop Horsley, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Doddridge, and Dr. Adam Clarke*.

Bishop Pearson's views of this passage have been already fully stated.

Bishop HORSLEY observes + that "these words of the Creed 'he descended into Hell,' declare what was done by his rational soul in its intermediate state." And afterwards quoting the passage which has been under discussion, "Thou wilt not leave my soul," &c. proceeds thus "From this text if there were no other, the Article, in the sense in which we have explained it, is clearly and infallibly deduced; for if the soul of Christ were not left in hell at his resurrection, then it was in hell before his resurrection. But it was not there either before his death or after his resurrection, for that never was imagined: therefore it descended into hell after his death, and before his resurrection; for as his flesh, by virtue of the divine promise, saw no corruption, although it was in the grave, the place of corruption, where it remained until his resurrection, so his soul, which by virtue of the like promise was not left in hell, was in that hell where it was not left. until the time came for its reunion to the body for the accomplishment of the resurrection. Hence it is so clearly evinced that the soul of Christ was in the place

^{*} None of these authors, however, present a full and particular answer to the formidable argument, urged with great force by respectable Commentators and Critics, that soul in this passage means the animal life. Bishop Horsley takes no notice of it. Dr. Campbell merely adverts to it. Bishop Pearson answers it somewhat in detail. King incidently notices it in his history of the Apostles' creed.

called hell, 'that none but an infidel,' s iith St. Augustme, 'can deny it.'"

Dr. CAMPRELL vindicates the same construction of this passage.

Dr. Doddende paraphrases the words, "Thou will not leave my soul in hell," thus, "I am fully satisfied, that thou wilt not leave my soul white separated from it (the body) in the insecon world." And, in opposition to the opinion advanced by Whitey and others, that the soul here is put for the animal tipe or dead body, and 23%. Hades for the grave, he observes in a note, "As $4e\chi h$ which is the word here used, can hardly be thought to signify a dead body, and 23%; is generally put for the state of separate spirits, the version here given seemed preferable to any other."

Dr. ADAM CLARKE interprets the same words of the soul of Christ not being left in the state of separate spirits.

The opposite construction which has been given of this passage, and the hostility to the doctrine of an intermediate state, and of the descent of Christ into Hell, among many Protestant Divines, appear to have arisen from an apprehension of countenancing the papal doctrine of purgatory, to which, however, the primitive and correct doctrine of the state of separate spirits gives no countenance.

But it is of primary importance, in this discussion, to ascertain the correct meaning of the word which, in this passage and many others of the sacred writings, is translated Hell. If this mean a place of departed spirits, then of course the existence of this place is not only established, but also the descent of the spirit or soul of Christ into the same abode.

The word Hell in our English translation of the Bible, answers in the original to two distinct words, adms (Hebrew Sheol) Hades, denoting merely a secret, invisible place, and hence applied to the place of departed spirits; and years gehenna signifying the place of final torment.

There can be no doubt that the acceptation of the word 275%, or 25%, Hades among the Greeks, was the place of the departed. In the commencement of the Iliad, it was to "2757" "Pluto's gloomy reign" that the anger of Achilles hurled

" The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain."

Answering to the alms of the Greeks, is the orcus of the Romans. It was the boast of Virgil's Heroes*.

- " ---- Multos Danaûm dimittimus Orco."
- " With gods averse we follow to the fight
- " And undistinguished in the shades of night
- " Mix with the foes, employ the murdering steel
- " And plunge whole squadrons to the depths of Hell."

The existence of a region where the departed shades resided was the popular belief of the Greeks and Romans, and was denoted by the arons or adons of the one, and the Oreus or inferi of the other. And it is reasonable to conclude that the Apostles would use the word adons, hades, in its popular signification, as denoting the place of the departed.

But to denote the place of final torment they employed another word yéeva, gehenna, a compound of two Hebrew words signifying the valley of Hinnom. It was originally a pleasant valley, planted with trees and watered with fountains, near to Jerusalem, by the brook of

kedron. The Jews placed there the image of Moloch, to which they sacrificed their children. When these horrid sacrifices were abolished by Josias the pious king of Israel, the place became so abominable, that they cast there the carcases of animals and the dead bodies of criminals, where they were consumed by fire. Hence it was used, to denote the place of future torment, not only by the Jews, but by Christ and his Apostles. Tophet, from Toph, which signifies a drum, was a name also applied to this place; the noise of drums being employed at the sacrifices, to drown the cries of the victims. And hence Tophet also, among the Jews, denoted the place of future punishment*.

These two words zons and years, Hades and Gehenna, are indiscriminately rendered Hell in the New Testament. But wherever the former word Hades is translated Hell, the place of departed spirits is meant; and wherever gehenna is rendered Hell, the place of the damned is denoted.

The idea of the place of torment is now commonly connected with this word Hell. But the original meaning of the word "Hell" was no more than a hidden or invisible place, from the Saxon word "helan" to cover over. In this acceptation it is used as the translation of the Greek word adns, hades. Dr. Doddridge observes (Com. on Rev. i. 18.) "Our English, or rather Saxon word Hell, in its original signification (though it is now understood in a more limited sense) exactly answers to the Greek word hades, and denotes a concealed or unseen place, and this sense of the word is still retained in the eastern and especially the western counties of England; to hell over a

^{*} See Schleusner's Lexicon, Art. Γέεννα, and Campbell's Prelim, Dissert. Part ii. 1, and Calmet's Dict. Art. Gehenna and Tophet.

thing is to cover it." Dr. Campbell observes, (Prelim. Dissertations vi. Part ii. 2.) "The term adns hades was written anciently aidns, ab a priv. et side video, and signifies obscure, hidden, invisible. To this the word hell in its primitive signification perfectly corresponded. For, at first it denoted only what was secret or concealed. This word is found with little variation of form and precisely in the same meaning in all the Teutonic dialects." "The term hades implies properly, neither hell nor the grave, but the place or state of departed souls."

"The word hell, (says Dr. Adam Clarke *) used in the common translation conveys now an improper meaning of the original word; because hell is only used to signify the place of the damned. But as the word hell comes from the Anglo Saxon helan, to cover or hide, hence the tyling or slating of a house is called in some parts of England (particularly Cornwall) heling to this day, and the covers of books (in Lancaster) by the same name; so the literal import of the original word "Adns was formerly well expressed by it +."

"The word Hell in its natural import," (says Bishop Horsley †) "signifies only that invisible place which is the appointed habitation of departed souls in the interval between death and the general resurrection."

In this acceptation of the word Hell as the place of the departed, answering to the abns of the Greeks and the

^{*} Com. on Matt. xi. 23.

[†] Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, gives, as one meaning of Hell, "the place of departed spirits whether good or bad." But Mr. Webster, omits this acceptation of the word which is founded on its Saxon derivation; though he professes that his acquaintance with the Saxon language, "the mother tongue of the English," qualifies him eminently for accurately defining English words.

[†] Sermon, Vol. ii. 89.

among the Jews. It is derived from שאול SHEOL used among the Jews. It is derived from שאל, which signifies to ask, to crave, to crave as a loan.

In the first signification of its derivative, simply to ask; SHEOL denotes a place which is an object of universal inquiry, the unknown massion about which all are anxiously inquisitive.

In the second acceptation of its derivative; SHEOL is represented as a place of insatiable craving; which characteristic is frequently assigned it in several parts of Scripture. "Hell (Sheol) hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure," saith the Prophet. (Is. v. 11.) "The proud man," (saith another Prophet, Habakkuk ii. 5.) "enlargeth his desire as Hell," (Sheol.)

In the third meaning of the derivative of Sheol, to demand or crave as a loan, implying that what is sought for is to be rendered back; "SHEOL is to be understood, not simply as the region of departed spirits, but as the region which is to form their temporary residence, and from which at some future time they are to be rendered up; thus indicating an intermediate state of the soul between its departure from this world, and some future state of its existence *."

As the region of the dead, or place of the departed, Sheol, or Hell is used in the Old Testament. But the Hebrew word for the grave is I Keber, the receptacle of the dead body but not of the soul, and accordingly, the Hebrew word for soul, nephesh, is never joined with Keber but with Sheol, the term denoting the abode of departed spirits. The Hebrew Sheol is never used for

^{*} See Magee on the Atonement, &c. p. 348, note. And Horsley Com. on Hosea, p. 158.

[†] Peters on Job, p. 320.

the grave, though it is sometimes translated by this word. This, Bishop Horsley proves, with his usual acumen. "Although Keber (the grave) is never used for Sheol, to signify Hell; there are five texts in which the contrary may seem to have taken place; namely, the use of Sheol for Keber, to signify the repository of the body, rather than the mansion of the departed spirit. These five texts are, Gen. xlii. 38.; xliv. 29. and 31.; 1 Kings ii. 6. and 9. But, upon consideration, it will appear, that in every one of these, the thing to be expressed is neither "Hell," nor "the Grave," particularly, and as distinct the one from the other; but the state of Death: and this state is expressed under the image of a place of residence of the dead collectively. And for this place, taken in the gross, not as divided into the two separate lodgments of the spirit and the carcase, the word שאול is used. It is, therefore, very ill rendered by the word "Grave," even in these texts; and "Hell" would be a better rendering. Because the only general place of residence of the dead collectively is that of the departed spirit. The Grave is no general place, since every dead body has its own appropriate Grave. Perhaps in these instances the word Sheol would be best expressed, in English, by a periphrasis, "region of the dead," or "dwelling of the dead," or "the nether regions."

There is yet a sixth text, Psalm cxli. 7. in which we read, in the English Bible, of "bones scattered at the Grave's mouth;" but, in the Hebrew,——— "at the mouth of Sheol." This passage is often alleged, as an evident instance of the use of the use of the Grave. But the fact is, that here we have no mention of the Grave at all. For the Psalmist is clearly speaking of the bones of persons massacred, whose bodies never were in any Grave, but had been left to rot, unburied, upon the sur-

face of the earth. And the mouth of Sheol in this surface, considered as the entrance of Sheol; which, in the imagery of the sacred writers, as well as of the oldest Greek Poets, is always considered as in the central parts of the earth's hollow sphere *."

The word SHEOL, and in the Septuagint, Hades, first occurs in Gen. xxxvii. 34. and is translated grave. Jacob says, "I will go down into the grave to my son, mourning." But the rendering should be-" I will go down to Hades, to Hell," that is, the place of the departed, "to my son, mourning." The Patriarch did not mean that he should go into the grave to his son; for then KEBER, which literally signifies the grave, as it is Gen. xxxv. 20, " and Jacob set a pillar upon Rachel's grave," would have been used. His son also he supposed was torn in pieces by a wild beast, and therefore the idea of his literally going down to him in the grave would not have naturally occurred. But if we consider the word Sheol as denoting the place of the departed, we give a forcible and natural meaning to the declaration of the patriarch.

Bishop PATRICK observes on this passage that "SHEOL must signify the state or place of the dead +, as it often doth ‡." Lowth remarks §. "The word Sheol cannot be understood of the grave properly so called, because Jacob thought his son was devoured by some wild beast; but must be meant of the place where

^{*} Com. on Hosea, p. 200.

^{† &}quot;Region of the dead," is synonymous with the place of the departed, because, as Bishop Horsley observes, (Com. on Hosea, p. 200.) "The only general place of residence of the dead collectively is that of the departed spirit."

[‡] Patrick on Gen. xxxv.

[§] Lowth on Isaiah xiv. 9.

he supposed Joseph's soul was lodged." Archbishop SECKER asserts, "The translation into the grave is wrong; as if he meant to have his body laid by Joseph's. That could not be, for he thought him devoured by wild beasts. It means into the invisible state, the state of departed souls; and in this sense it is said of several of the Patriarchs that they "were gathered unto their people. Gen. xx. 58. Gen. xxxv. 29. and of 'all that generation' which lived with Joshua, that they 'were gathered unto their Fathers.'"

The learned VITRINGA in his Commentary on Isaiah *, quotes this passage and several others in the Old Testament, in which he says the word sheel ought to be translated not grave but hell, in the sense of a receptacle of departed spirits.

It is almost needless to remark that the word SHEOL or Hades, in this passage, could not possibly mean the state of the damned.

In the book of Job; there is a very sublime description of the power of the Almighty. "Hell is naked before him." The word "Hell," in the original is Sheol, and means the state or place of the departed. So it is understood by the learned Commentators on Job, Schulterns and Peters; by Patrick, by Lowth, and by Scott, the latter of whom thus paraphrases it; "Neither the bodies which all over the earth are laid in the grave, nor the state of the departed souls of men, are concealed from his all-seeing eye."

Dr. Magee in a Dissertation on the History and Book of Job, annexed to his *Discourses on the Atonement*, gives a new rendering of the passage which contains the above verse. He founds it on the opinion of the Jews,

^{*} Com. Isa. xiv. 9. p. 433.

who held, "Gehenna, or the place of perdition, to be the lowest part of Sheol, the general receptacle of departed souls: and that in order to express the great depth to which they conceive it to be sunk, they are used to describe it as beneath the waters: their idea being that the waters are placed below the earth. Tartarus in like manner the Greeks made the lowest part of Hades, (Windet de vita functorum statu)*."

On this Jewish notion of Sheol, or Hell, Dr. Magee gives a new rendering to the two verses of Job xxvi. 5, 6, which stand in our translation thus:

- 5 Dead things are formed
 From under the waters and the inhabitants thereof.
- 6 Hell is naked before him

 And destruction hath no covering.

Dr. Magee renders them thus:

- 5 "The souls of the dead tremble;
 "[The places] below the waters, and their inhabitants.
- 6 "The seat of spirits is naked before him:"And the region of destruction hath no covering.
- "Here I take the souls of the dead, and the inhabitants of the places below the (abyss of) waters, to bear to each other the same proportion, that is found in the next verse to subsist between the seat of spirits, and the region of
- * Magee's Dissertations on the Atonement, &c. p. 349. In a note to Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, (Vol. i. p. 213.) it is observed "that the place where the wieked after death were supposed to be confined was believed, from the destruction of the old world by the deluge, the covering of the Asphaltic vale with the Dead Sea, &c. to be situated under the waters. To this idea," which certainly very naturally accounts for the popular belief on this subject, "there are allusions in the sacred writings without number."

destruction: those of the dead who were sunk in the lowest parts of Sheol, being placed in the region of destruction, or the Gehenna of the later Jews. So that the passage, on the whole, conveys this; that nothing is, or can be concealed from the all-seeing eye of God; that the souls of the dead tremble under his view, and the shades of the wicked sunk to the bottom of the abyss, can even there find no covering from his sight."

In the sublime passage of the prophet Isaiah, (ch. xiv.) where the deceased tyrants are represented as rising to meet the King of Babylon, and in the passages of the prophet Ezekiel (xxxi. xxxii.) where the same description is applied to the King of Egypt, HELL without doubt signifies the place of the departed. In the prophet Ezekiel, "the strong among the mighty," are represented as speaking to him, the King of Egypt, "out of the midst of hell." The elder Lowth in his Commentary considers the whole passage as "a poetical description of the infernal regions, where the Ghosts of deceased tyrants with their subjects, are represented as coming to meet the King of Egypt and his auxiliaries upon their arrival to the same place; Hell signifies here the state of the dead." On the passage in Isaiah xiv. 9. "Hell from beneath is moved for thee," LOWTH remarks, "the Hebrew word Sheol which our translation renders Hell, or the Grave, signifies the state of the dead in general, and is indifferently applied to the good and bad." "Thus then," as Dr. Magee observes. " in like manner as Homer, in his Odyssey, sends the souls of the slaughtered wooers to Hades, where they meet with the manes of Achilles, Agamemnon, and other Heroes; so the Hebrew poet, in this passage of inimitable grandeur, describes the king of Babylon, when slain and brought to the grave, as entering Sheol, and there meeting the Rephaim, or manes of the dead, who had descended thither before him, and who are poetically represented as rising from their seats at his approach. And as, on the one hand, the passage in the Grecian bard has been always held, without any question, to be demonstrative of the existence of a popular belief amongst the Greeks, that there was a place called *Hades*, which was the receptacle for departed souls: so this poetic image of Isaiah must be allowed, upon the other, to indicate in like manner, amongst the Jews, the existence of a popular belief that there was a region for departed souls called *Sheol*, in which the *Rephaim* or Manes took up their abode."

Bishop Lowth, in his lectures and commentary, considers this passage as a personification of the grave. But the learned VITRINGA proves that it is a representation, not of the grave, but of Hell, the receptacle of departed souls.

In his Commentary on Isaiah *, he states that it was the common opinion among the Jews, and the Greeks and the Romans, that there was a receptacle of separate spirits to which the Jews gave the name how, sheol, the Greeks adns, and the Latins inferi, all answering to the English word Hell. He quotes several examples from the Old Testament to prove that the Jews considered Hell as the receptacle of separate spirits, who, they thought were not deprived of consciousness after death. And this opinion, he states expressly was not erroneous.

There are some learned men who incline to the opinion, that the Jews derived their notions of a future state from the Pagan writers. But the contrary opinion is much more probable, that the pagan views of the state of the dead were corruptions of the early patriarchal revelations.

^{*} Vitringa's Com. Isa. chap. xiv. part i. p. 432, 433.

As the learned Calmet observes *, "The Hebrews thought and spoke almost like the Greeks before Homer, Hesiod, and the most ancient poets of this nation." Moses speaks of "the lowest Hell+." Job, "Hell is naked before God ‡." Solomon, "Hell and destruction are before the Lord §." Here Hell as a place of the departed is spoken of by Jewish writers who preceded the most ancient Greek Poets. In the opinion that the Pagans derived their views of the state of the dead, from the ancient Hebrews, Calmet is supported by Bishop Horsley, and by the learned Vitringa|.

The opinions of the ancient Hebrews, and of the Heathen at large, concerning the place of the departed, are represented at length by VITRINGA. A compressed statement of his detail of their opinions is given by Abp. Magee ¶, "That the souls of men, when released from the body by death, pass into a vast subterraneous region, as a common receptacle, but with different mansions, adapted to the different qualities of its inhabitants: and that here, preserving the shades and resemblances of the living, they fill the same characters they did in life.—That this entire region was called by the Jews Sheol, by the Greeks Hades, and by the Latins Inferi.—That these were the notions that commonly prevailed amongst the Jews, he conceives to be fully established by various parts of Scripture: and to this, he thinks, the history of the witch of

^{*} Calmet's Dict. Art. Hell. The English edition of CALMET, by D'Oyly and Calson is here quoted. The modern edition by Taylor, has very seriously mutilated the original work; though the "Fragments" that are annexed, are many of them valuable additions.

[†] Deut. xxxii. 22.

¹ Job xx. vi. 5.

[§] Prov. xv. 11.

^{||} Com. on Isa. xiv. 9.

[¶] Magee on the Atonement, p. 346, &c.

Endor yields confirmation, inasmuch as, let the illusion in that transaction be what it might, it goes to establish the fact of the opinion which was then vulgarly received .--Agreeably to this Lypothesis, he contends, that various expressions of the patriarchs and prophets are to be explained; and to this purpose he instances Gen. xxxvii, 35. Ps. xvi. 10. xxx. 4. xciv. 17. in all of which, a place where souls, when freed from the body, were assembled, still preserving all their faculties, -is, as he thinks, plainly supposed-From the Hobrews, he conceives that this opinion passed to the other people, and became disfigured by various fictions of their respective invention. Thus the doctrine of the Egyptians respecting Hades, is given in the second book of Herodotus; where we have the history of Rhampsinitus, who, according to the traditions of the Egyptians, had visited the infernal regions and returned safe to life. The notion, he says, was variously embellished by the Greek poets: and afterwards, being stripped by Plate of much of its poetic ornaments, was embodied by him in his philosophical system. Hence again the Latins and the nations at large, derived their phraseology in speaking of the state of the dead, for instances of which phraseology he refers to Velleius, Livy, Florus, and others."

The Greeks and Romans then, had their place of the departed, to which they gave the names of aidns and orcus. The Hebrews had their place of the departed, which they denominated by SHEOL; and which the Septuagint in the sense of the Greek adns, hades, translated by this term. The place of the departed, Bishop Horsley observes, is the only "Hell of the Old Testament *."

It cannot be supposed that the writers of the New

^{*} Bishop Horsley's Com. on Hosea, p. 46.

Testament were strangers to the popular belief of their countrymen, and of the Heathen generally, with respect to the region of the departed. When they used the term aon, hades, they undoubtedly used it in its settled, universal and appropriate signification of the place of departed spirits. This was the signification which the authors of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, annexed to the term. Except in a very few instances, they have translated the Hebrew word Sheol, which occurs in above sixty places in the Old Testament, nut by θάνετος, death, by τάφος, the grave, by μνήμα or μνημείον, the sepulchre; but by αδης, hades, the appropriate word for the region of the dead, for the place of the departed, in a state of consciousness. The writers of the New Testament quote from this Septuagint translation, in which the word Hades is put for Sheol. must therefore have considered Hades as expressing, what Sheol does in the Old Testament, the place of departed souls.

The inquiry as to the *situation* of this place of departed spirits, cannot be important. It is sufficient to know that there is a place of residence assigned them, in some part of the vast universe of God.

Bishop Horsley with great ingenuity advocates the opinion that the receptacle of the departed is in the inner parts of the earth. "It is evident," he says, "that this" (the place to which our Lord descended) "must be some place below the surface of the earth; for it is said that he 'descended,' that is, he went down to it. Our Lord's death took place upon the surface of the earth, where the human race inhabit; that, therefore, and none higher, is the place from which he descended; of consequence, the

place to which he went by descent was below it, and it is with relation to these parts below the surface that his rising to life on the third day must be understood. This was only a return from the nother regions to the realms of life and day, from which he had descended,—not his ascension into heaven, which was a subsequent event, and makes a distinct article in the Creed."

"The sacred writer of the Old Testament speak of such a common mansion in the inner parts of the earther and we find the same opinion so general among the heathen writers of antiquity, that it is more probable that it had its rise in the earliest patriarchal revolutions, than in the imaginations of man, or in poetical fiction. The notion is confirmed by the language of the writers of the New Testament, with this additional of commance, that they divided this central mansion of the head into two distinct regions, for the separate longing of the souls of the righteous and the reprobate. In this, too, they have the concurrence of the earliest heathen poets, who placed the good and the bad in separate divisions at the central region *."

In respect to the situation of Heaven and of Hades, Dr. CAMPBELL supposes that the "expressions implying that hades is under the earth, and that the scar of the blessed is above the stars, pugh to be regarded merely as attempts to accommodate what is spoken to vulgar apprehensions and language †."

Of the same opinion is Bishop Lowth, who remarks, —"Observing that after death the body returned to the earth, and that it was deposited in a sepulchre after the manner which has just been described, a sort of popular notion prevailed among the Hebrews, as well as among

^{*} Ser. xx. Vol. ii.

other nations, that the life which succeeded the present was to be passed beneath the earth: and to this notion even the sacred prophets were obliged to allude occasionally, if they wished to be understood by the people on this subject *."

From this popular opinion, that the receptacles of departed souls were under the earth, arose the use of the word descended, in reference to the passage of Christ into the place of departed spirits.

But though with regard to the situation of the receptacle of the departed, there may have been an accommodation to popular notions by the inspired writers, we shall pervert entirely their meaning, and indeed render it wholly uncertain, if we suppose that this accommodation extended to all which they declare concerning the state of the dead. The basis of popular fiction in theology is, some truth or fact, which imagination or superstition may embellish or corrupt, but not to such a degree, as to disguise it, from the judicious and discriminating inquirer. And on this principle, the truths of revelation may be confirmed, by ascertaining the prevalence of opinions allied to them, in the mythology of Heathen nations. Thus, in the subject under discussion, the correspondence in many respects between the theology of the Pagans and that of the Jews concerning the state of the departed, corroborates the opinion that both must have had their origin in a patriarchal revelation; and therefore divested of the fictions of imagination, and the corruptions of superstition, must, in essential points, be true.

Whatever be the precise situation of the place of departed spirits, there can be no doubt, considering it as the

Lowth on Hebrew Poetry, Vol. i. p. 163.

general receptacle of the souls of the righteous and of the wicked, that they exist there in different conditions; and in different regions of that unknown abode; the one in a state of happiness and the other of misery.

Although the general name for the receptacle of the departed, without particular reference to their state of happiness or misery, among the Jews was "NW", sheel; among the Greeks, 20ns, hades; and among the Latins, orcus and inferi, all answering to the English word Hell; they all assigned different abodes in this vast region, to the righteous and the wicked.

The Hades or Hell of the Heathen contained the souls of the departed, both good and bad. In his descent into Hades, Hell, ULYSSES not only saw the soul of Achilles "γηθοσόνη," joyful, traversing the "ασφοδελόν λειμωνα;" corresponding with the "amena vireta," the flowery plains of Virgil; but other souls

.Encas and the Sybil his companion, traverse the abodes of the departed.

- " Perque domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna †."
- " ------ the dismal gloom they pass, and tread
- " Grim Pluto's courts, the regions of the dead."

Here they view the different habitations of the wicked and the good-

the gloomy Tartarus

- " the seat of night profound, and punished fiends !."
- * Homer Odyss. xi. 536, &c. † Virg. Æn. vi. 269. † Virg. Æn. vi. 542.

⁻⁻ άχνύμεναι, ειροντο δε κηδε, έκάστη."

[&]quot;All wailing with unutterable woes *."

and the fields of Elysium

" _____ the flowery plains

The Hell of the Jews seems also to have been distinguished into two regions, an upper and a lower Hell, answering to the Elysium and the Tartarus of the Poets; the lower Hell being the place destined for the souls of the wicked. "Thou hast delivered my soul," saith the Psalmist, "from the lowest Hell:" on which passage, St. Austin in his Commentary observes, "we understand it, as if there were two Hells, an upper and a lower." Moses describes the justice of God (Deut. xxxii. 22.) "a fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn unto the lowest Hell" (sheel).

There is an ingenious conjecture of Peter's, in his "Critical Dissertation on the book of Job+," that the place for good souls is denoted in the Old Testament, by the phrase which so frequently occurs of "being gathered to their Fathers," or "their people;" "to the assembly of good and pious souls, worshippers of the true God, who were admitted into covenant with him, and lived and died in the observance of that covenant; as the old Patriarchs the ancestors of the Jewish people did ‡."

But the views of the Jews with respect to a future state were *comparatively* obscure, because of the imperfection of their dispensation, which was only a "shadow of good things to come."

Agreeably however, to the representation of the place

[&]quot; The verdant groves where endless pleasure reigns "."

^{*} Virg. Æn. vi. 638.

[†] This work is quoted with respect by Abp. Magee in his Discourses on the Atonement, Note p. 347.

[†] Peter's Dissertations on Job, p. 381, 382.

of the departed of the Jews, as consisting of two great divisions for the righteous and wicked, is the account of Hades or Hell which is given in the New Testament.

Though in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus every circumstance is not to be understood literally, yet the general design of the parable certainly is to shew, what becomes of the souls of the righteous and the wicked Hell is there represented as a vast region, after death. which, as the receptacle of departed spirits in general, contained the soul of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, that is, "gathered to his Fathers," in a state of blessedness with the Father of the faithful; and the soul of Dives in torment, in Hell, in the lower Sheol. But in this immeasurable region, the two abodes of the righteous and the wicked are "afar off," and between them is "a great" and impassible "gulph fixed." There appears a correspondence between this representation and the Pagan notion of the aons, Hades, or Inferi, the abodes of the Homer describes Tartarus, or the place of punishment of the wicked, as far remote from Elysium, both which he comprehends under the general name of aldris *

But notwithstanding the distance between these separate regions, and his application of the general term Hades, to the dwelling of spirits not in punishment, he seems to consider them as parts of the same region of the departed †•

So Virgil describes Tartarus, as a separate part of the great region of Orcus, Hell:

- " Respecit Æneas subito; et subrupe sinistra
- " Mænia lata videt, triplici circumdata muro;

^{*} Iliad viii. 13.

- " Quæ rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis
- "Tartareus Phlegeton, torquetque sonantia saxa *.
- "The hero, looking on the left, espy'd
- " A lofty tower, and strong on every side
- "With treble walls which Phlegeton surrounds;
- "Whose fiery flood the burning empire bounds,
- "And press'd betwixt the rocks, the bellowing noise resounds."

The accordance between the Hell or place of the departed of the Heathen Poets, and that of the Jews; and the division of it into two separate abodes for the souls of the righteous and the wicked, are thus clearly established by Dr. CAMBELL, in the explanation of the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

"The Jews did not indeed adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek Hades they found well adapted to express the Hebrew sheol. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations for ghosts of different characters. And though they did not receive the terms Elysium or Elysian fields, as suitable appellations for the regions peopled by good spirits, they took instead of them, as better adapted to their own theology, the garden of Eden or Paradise, a name originally Persian, by which the word answering to garden, especially when applied to Eden, had commonly been rendered by the Seventy. To denote the same state. they sometimes used the phrase Abraham's bosom, a metaphor borrowed from the manner in which they reclined at meals. But, on the other hand, to express the unhappy situation of the wicked in that intermediate state, they do not seem to have declined the use of the word

tartarus. The Apostle Peter, says of evil angels that God cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. stands in the common version, though neither yesvia nor alns are in the original, where the expression is, σειξαϊ ζόφου ταρταρώσας παρέδωκεν είς κείσιν τετηρεμένους. The word is not γέεννα; for that comes after judgment; but ταρταγος, which is, as it were, the prison of hades, wherein criminals are kept till the general judgment. And as in the ordinary ase of the Greek word, it was comprehended under hades, as a part; it ought, unless we had some positive reason to the contrary, by the ordinary rules of interpretation, to be understood so here. There is then no inconsistency in maintaining that the rich man, though in torments, was not in gehenna, but in that part of hades called turturus, where we have seen already that spirits reserved for judgment are detained in darkness."

"According to this explication, the rich man and Lazarus were both in hades, though in very different situations, the latter in the mansions of the happy, and the former in those of the wretched. Let us see how the circumstances mentioned, and the expressions used, in the parable, will suit this hypothesis. First, though they are said to be at a great distance from each other, they are still within sight and hearing. This would have been too gross a violation of probability, if the one were considered as inhabiting the highest heavens, and the other as placed in the infernal regions. Again, the expressions used, are such as entirely suit this explanation, and no other; for, first, the distance from each other is mentioned, but no hint that the one was higher in saturation than the other; secondly, the terms, whereby motion from the one to the

other is expressed, are such as are never employed in expressing motion to or from heaven, but, always, when the places are on a level, or nearly so. Thus Lazarus, when dead, is said * απενεχθήναι, to be carried away, not ανενεχήναι, to be carried up, by angels into Abraham's bosom; whereas, it is the latter of these, or one similarly compounded, that is always used, where an assumption into heaven is spoken of. Thus, the same writer, in speaking of our Lord's ascension, says + ἀνεφέρετο είς τον οὐρανον, and Mark in relation to the event, says † ἀνελής Ͽη είς τον οὐρανον he was taken up into heaven. These words are also used, wherever one is said to be conveyed from a lower to a higher situation. But what is still more decisive in this way; where mention is made of passing from Abraham to the rich man, and inversely, the verbs employed are, διαβαίνω and διαπεράω, words which always denote motion on the same ground or level; as, passing a river or lake, passing through the Red Sea, or passing from Asia to Macedonia. But, when heaven is spoken of as the termination to which, or from which the passage is made, the word is, invariably either in the first case, αναβαίνω, and in the second, καταβαίνω, or some word similarly formed, and of the same import. Thus both the circumstances of the story, and the expressions employed in it, confirm the explanation I have given. For, if the sacred penmen wrote to be understood, they must have employed their words and phrases, in conformity to the current usage of those for whom they wrote."

That region of the departed, where the souls of the righteous repose, in the interval between death and the resurrection, is denominated by our Saviour, Paradise-

Luke xvi. 22. † Luke xxiv. 51. † Mark xvi. 19.

This day," says he to the pentent thief, "thou shalt be with me in Paradise," not in Heaven, the region of the blessed. For, as Bishop Rorsley observes *, "Paradise was certainly some place where our Lord was to be on the very day on which he suffered, and where the companion of his sufferings was to be with him. It was not heaven; for to heaven our Lord ascended not till after his resurrection, as appears from his own words to Mary Magdalen. He was not therefore in heaven on the day of the crucifixion; and, where he was not, the thief could not be with him. It was no place of torment; for to any such place the name of paradise never was applied. It could be no other than the region of repose and rest, where the souls of the righteous abide, in joyful hope of the consummation of their bliss."

"Paradise among the Jews," observes Bishop Bull, "primarily signified the Garden of Eden, that blessed garden wherein Adam in his state of innocence dwelt. By which, because it was a most pleasant and delightful place, they were wont symbolically to represent the place and state of good souls separated from their bodies, and waiting for the resurrection; whom they believed to be in a state of happiness, far exceeding all the felicities of this life; but yet inferior to that consummate bliss which follows the resurrection. Hence it was the solemn good wish of the Jews (as the learned tell us from the Talmudists) concerning their dead friend, Let his soul be in the garden of Eden, or, Let his soul be gathered into the Garden of Eden. And in their prayers for a dying person, they used to say, Let him have his portion in Paradise, and also in the world to come-In which form Paradise and the World to come, are plainly distinguished.

^{*} Sermons, Vol. ii. 92.

According to which notion, the meaning of our Saviour in his promise to the penitent thief, is evidently this: That he should presently after his death enter with him into that place of bliss and happiness, where the souls of the righteous, separated from their bodies inhabit, and where they wait in a joyful expectation of the resurrection, and the consummation of their bliss in the highest heaven. For that our Saviour here did not promise the thief an immediate entrance into that Heaven, the Ancients gathered from hence, that he himself, as man, did not ascend thither till after his resurrection, as our very Creed informs us; which is also St. Austin's argument in his fifty-seventh epistle."

Dr. Adam Clarke observes in his Commentary, that "the garden of Eden mentioned Gen. ii. 8. is also called from the Septuagint, the garden of Paradise.—Hence the word has been transplanted into the New Testament, and is used to signify a place of exquisite delight. The word Paradise is not Greek, but is of Asiatic origin. In Arabic and Persian it signifies a garden, a vineyard, the place of the blessed. Our Lord's words intimate that this penitent should be immediately taken to the abode of the spirits of the just, where they should enjoy the presence and approbation of the Most High *."

Dr. WHITBY considers Paradise as "the place into which pious souls separated from the body, were immediately received +."

Dr. DODDRIDGE also speaks of Paradise as "the abode of happy spirits when separate from the body ;, that garden of God which is the seat of happy spirits in

^{*} Clarke's Com. on Luke xxiii. 43. † Whitby on Luke xxiii. 43.

[†] Doddridge on Luke xxiii. 43.

the intermediate state, and during their separation from the body."

Now, as in Heaven, happy spirits are united with their glorified bodies, the place where they abide, when separate from their bodies, is not Heaven, but a region of the place of the departed, styled *Paradise*.

Dr. MACKNIGHT states* that "the name Paradise was also given to the place where the spirits of the just, after death, reside in felicity, till the resurrection, as appears from our Lord's words to the penitent thief."

It may be asked—is not this view of Paradise as a place of enjoyment to the righteous, and yet a part of Hades or Hell, incompatible with the figurative representation of this latter place as an enemy which Christ is to conquer, and from whose power he is to redeem his people-" I will redeem them from the power of the grave," (sheel, or Hell,) Hosea xiii. 14. Bishop Horsley answers this inquiry. "The state of the departed Saints while they continue there," (in sheel, hades, bell, the place of the departed) " is a condition of unfinished bliss, in which the souls of the justified would not have remained for any time, (if indeed they had ever entered it,) had not Sin introduced Death. It is a state, therefore, consequent upon Death; consequent, therefore, upon Sin, though no part of the punishment of it. And the resurrection of the Saints is often described as an enlargement of them by our Lord's power, from confinement in a place, not of punishment, but of inchoate enjoyment only. Our Lord will break the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder,' and set at liberty 'his prisoners of hope.' And when this place of safe keeping is personified, it is, con-

^{*} Com. on 2 Cor. xii. 4.

sistently with these notions of it, represented as one of the enemies which Christ is to subdue."

Against the opinion, that Paradise is a distinct place from Heaven, it may be urged, that St. Paul speaks * of "being caught up into the third Heavens," and "being caught up into Paradise." It was the opinion of all the ancient Fathers that St. Paul speaks of two distinct visions, and of course the scenes of these visions the third Heavens and Paradise, are not necessarily the same. Dr. Whithey maintains that there were different visions, and that Paradise is distinct from the third Heavens. "The opinion of all the ancients," he observes, "seems to have been this, that he was caught at several times into several places. Hence it doth not follow that Paradise is in the third Heaven †."

The learned Bishop Bull makes the same distinction between the visions of St. Paul, and between Paradise and the third Heavens; in which he is followed by Dr. Doddridge §. And Dr. Campbell establishes this distinction, in the Preliminary Dissertation which has been so often quoted. The phrase, being caught up, may be supposed contrary to the usual phraseology of Scripture, with respect to Hades or Paradise. But, as Campbell observes, the phrase $\alpha \rho \pi \dot{\alpha} \zeta \omega$ expresses more the sud-

* 2 Cor. xii. 1—4.

† Whitby on 2 Cor. xii. 1-4. ‡ Bishop Bull's Ser. Vol. i. 89, 97.

§ Com. on 2 Cor. xii. 1—4. Dr. Machnight and Dr. Adam Clarke are favourable to the same opinion; from which Scott differs, because, he says, the happiness of departed saints consists in being present with the Lord. As if God's blissful presence could not be in Paradise as well as in Heaven.

denness of the event, and the passiveness of the Apostle, than the direction of the motion.

The phrase "paradise of God" may seem to denote Heaven in Rev. ii. 7. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." "Here," as Dr. Campbell observes, "our Lord, no doubt, speaks of heaven, but as he plainly alludes to the state of matters in the garden of Eden, where our first parents were placed, and where the tree of life grew, it can only be understood as a figurative expression of the promise of eternal life, forfeited by Adam, but recovered by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus then it appears, from the above view, that the sheol of the Old Testament, and the adms or Hell of the New, means the place of departed spirits, where the souls of the righteous and the wicked abide in separate states of happiness or misery until the day of Judgment; and that into the division of this region called Paradise, the abode of the spirits of the righteous, the soul of our Saviour went, after his death.

The ends of our Saviour's descent, into the place of the departed, were of the most important nature.

1. In this respect as in all others, he was made like unto us. The separation of the body from the soul by death, the penalty of Adam's sin, he, as the second Adam, underwent. His body was deposited in the grave, where our bodies must slumber. And to complete his conformity to us, his soul went to that place of the departed, where our souls are to abide, during their absence from the body. This conformity in all respects to us, sin only excepted, was a part of that humiliation by which he sustained the penalties of our transgressions.

- 2. And thus, as our Redeemer and head, sanctifying by his presence the place of the departed, he hath divested this secret and retired abode of its terrors, and enlightened it by his mercy and grace. The $\pi \dot{\nu} \lambda \alpha \dot{\nu} \dot{\nu}$, the gates of Hades, he hath opened; and, by his power, they become, to the faithful, the entrance to a joyful resurrection of life and glory.
- 3. To afford us a pledge of this victory not only over death, but over Hades, over Hell, the place that confines our spirits during their separation from the body, was the last great object of his descent into it. "In hell, in hades, his soul was not left." Neither shall the souls of his people there remain. "He opened the gates of brass; he burst asunder the bars of iron;" and his spirit, disengaged from its prison-house and united to his body, ascended in glory to the regions of heavenly light. And when he who still holds the keys of Hell, of this invisible receptacle of the departed, shall pronounce the sentence "Go forth," the souls of his redeemed shall ascend, in the vestments of a glorified and incorruptible body, to that Heaven where there is "fulness of joy."

The fact, that Christ, in the interval between his death and his resurrection, went into the place of departed spirits, being proved, the existence of this place is, of course, established.

With regard to the position, in proof of the existence of the place of the departed, that an appropriate term adns, answering to the Hebrew SHEOL and to the original meaning of the word Hell as a secret or invisible place, is uniformly applied, in the New Testament, to

this state of departed spirits; it may be satisfactory to review all the passages of the New Testament where the word adns, Hades occurs.

The word abns, Hades, is found only in eleven places, and in all of them it denotes the place of departed spirits.

1. It occurs Acts ii. 27. and

- 2. Also Acts ii. 31. as applicable to our Saviour's soul being in Hell; the meaning of which, as denoting the place of departed spirits, has been, in the preceding pages, fully considered.
- 3. Luke xvi. 23. It occurs in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in the same signification. See page 473.
- 4. Matt. xi. 23. And thou Capernaum which art exalted to Heaven shall be cast down to Hell ($\tilde{\epsilon}\omega s \ \tilde{\alpha}\delta s$).

Heaven and Hell or Hades are here figuratively used. Heaven denoting, the highest object, and Hell or Hades the lowest, according to the notions of the Jews and Pagans in regard to the situation of these places. Capernaum being exalted to Heaven denotes her flourishing state, and brought down to Hell her low or depressed condition; even a state in which she would be no more seen; alluding to the signification of Hades, as an invisible place. Whitby, Doddridge, Schleusner and Clarke, agree in this construction of the passage.

5. The words occur in the same sense and application in Luke x. 15.

6. Mat. xvi. 18. "The gates of Hell (πύλαι ἄδε, the gates of Hades) shall not prevail against it," the Church. The expression is here figurative. Hades or the place of the dead is represented as a spacious receptacle, with gates, through which the dead enter. Hezekiah speaks (Isa. xxxviii. 10.) of the gates of the grave or Hades, and Homer speaks of Achilles hating (ἀίδας πύλησιν) "as the gates of Hell or Hades," that is, hating mortally *. The expression then, "the gates of Hell" (Hades) "shall not prevail against the Church," means it shall never enter the place of the departed, it shall never die, it shall continue for ever.

7. 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O grave (in the margin, hell, original $a\delta n$,) where is thy victory." The place of separate spirits is here meant, from which, at the resurrection at

^{*} Iliad ix. 312.

[†] Parkhurst, Article ἄδης.

the last day, the spirits of the departed shall come forth, to be "clothed upon with their house that is from Heaven." There seems to be here an allusion to Hosea xii. 13. which Bishop Horsley translates, "Death! I will be thy pestilence. Hell! I will be thy burning plague,"—on which he has the following note, "Hell—Not the place where the damned are to suffer their torment; but the invisible place where the souls of the departed remain, till the appointed time shall come for the reunion of soul and body." The Hebrew word Sheol, answering to the Greek Hades, is here improperly translated grave, which is denoted in the Hebrew by a distinct word KEBER. "No two things," Bishop Horsley observes, "can be more distinct, Hell is the mansion of the departed spirit; the Grave is the receptacle of the dead body *."

8. Rev. i. 18. "I have the keys of Hell ($\tau v \ a \delta v$) and of death." The Lord Jesus Christ is here represented as not only having power over death, to redeem the body from its dominion, but as holding the keys of Hell, of the place of the departed, from which he will release them, and reunite them to their incorruptible bodies. Dr. Doddride on this text paraphrases hell, as the unseen world, the invisible state in which the souls of men remain until Christ exerts his power of raising the dead †. The notions of Scott in his commentary with respect to this subject seem somewhat confused and contradictory. On this text however he unequivocally acknowledges a distinct state of departed spirits. His words are as follows: "He (the Lord Jesus Christ) possesses the absolute sovereignty

^{*} Com. on Hosea, p. 159.
† See Doddridge's note on this text, in this Appendix.

as dwelling in human nature over the invisible world, the state of separate spirits, and over death and the grave, so that he removes men out of this life, and consigns their bodies to the grave and corruption, when and as he pleases; he then fixes their souls in happiness or misery with absolute authority; and he will soon raise all their dead bodies, and either receive them into Heaven, or shut them up for ever in hell, as he sees good." In this passage, there is the state of separate spirits, in which the souls of men are either in happiness or misery, until their dead bodies being raised and united to their souls, they are fixed in the final heaven of happiness and hell of torments.

- 9. Rev. vi. 8. "And I looked and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was death, and hell (abns) followed with him."
- 10. Rev. xx. 13. "Death and Hell (28ns) delivered up the dead that were in them."
- 11. Rev. xx. 14. "And death and hell (αδης) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

These passages are very bold and sublime personifications. In the first, *Hell*, the place of departed spirits, follows death, denoting that immediately after the body becomes subject to the dominion of death, *Hell* or the invisible place receives the soul.

But, as is declared in the 2d passage, death shall deliver up the bodies, and Hell the spirits that were subject to their dominion. And

As is announced in the last verse, Death, as well as Hell, the place of the departed, shall be destroyed, shall be cast into the lake of fire. "The death which consists

in the separation of the soul and body, and the state of souls intervening between death and judgment shall be no more. To the wicked they shall be succeeded by a more terrible death, the damnation of gehenna," the hell of torments.

The last passage is an incontrovertible evidence, that hell is applied to the place of the departed. If by hell we understand the place of torments; as by the *lake of fire*, by which the second death is denominated, the hell of torments, is undoubtedly meant; then the personification becomes absolute nonsense—the hell of torments is cast into the hell of torments *.

Dr. Doddridge considers Hell in these passages as denoting the separate state. And Dr. Scott again unequivocally avows its existence. He thus comments on these passages, "The grave and separate state will give up the bodies and souls contained in them." "Then death and hell, the grave and separate state (represented as two persons) will be cast into the lake of fire: that is, they shall subsist no longer to receive the bodies and the souls of men."

The only instance of a personification, equal in boldness and sublimity to that contained in the above passages, is where the Prophet Isaiah represents the departed souls of mighty monarchs, in the place of the departed, as in motion and agitation at the approach of the departed spirit of the King of Babylon. "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming, it stirreth up the dead for thee \(\psi\)."

The above, it is believed, are all the passages in the

^{*} See Dr. Campbell's Prelim. Diss. vi. part ii. 13. † Isaiah xiv. 9.

New Testament in which the English word *Hell* is found corresponding to adns, Hades, in the original, and denoting the place of the departed.

There are thirteen passages in the New Testament in which the word Hell is found expressed by $\gamma \epsilon \epsilon \nu \nu \alpha$, Gehenna, in the original, and denoting the place of torment.

A summary of this doctrine of a place of departed spirits may be thus exhibited.

As the souls of men are not admitted into Heaven, the place of final happiness; nor into Hell, the place of final torment; according to the representations of the sacred writings, until the resurrection, and the judgment of the great day; and as the soul, both from reason and Scripture, is not previously in a state of unconsciousness*, it follows, that during this interval she must subsist in a separate state.

As the happiness of Heaven and the misery of Hell, the place of final torment, are represented in Scripture as the happiness or misery of the whole man, of his body united to his soul; and as this union, dissolved by death, is not renewed until the resurrection and judgment of the great day, it follows, that previously to this event, the soul cannot be a subject of the happiness of heaven, or of the misery of the final hell of torment, but must be in a separate state of incomplete, though inconceivably great felicity or woe.

And that there is this place of the departed, denomi-

^{*} In the Appendix I have not repeated the arguments in favour of the conscious state of the soul when separated by death from the body, which are succinctly stated in the Address.

nated in allusion to its secret and invisible character, adns, Hades, or Hell, where in distinct abodes, the souls of the righteous and of the wicked experience inconceivable happiness or misery, expecting the consummation of their felicity or woe, at the day of judgment, is placed beyond doubt by the fact that Christ's human soul was in hell, (hades,) in the place of the departed, and in that part of this place denominated Paradise, in the interval between his death and his resurrection. For

During this interval his human soul was in some place. Since, independently of every other consideration, it was declared of him, by the Prophet, that "his soul was not to be *left* in hell."

But his soul during this period could not have been in Heaven; for he did not ascend to Heaven, agreeably to his own declaration, until after his resurrection.

Nor could his soul have been in the Hell of torment, (an impious supposition,) for he declared as matter of triumph and joy to the penitent thief that after death they should be together in Paradise.

In Paradise then, that region of peace and joy, in Hades the place of the departed, was the human soul of the blessed Jesus in the interval between death and the resurrection.

And where the human soul of Jesus was during this period, there during the same period must be the souls of the human race whose sentence of mortality he sustained, and of whom he was the representative.

This doctrine has not the most remote connection with the papal doctrine of purgatory.

That the celebrated Protestants whose names have

been exhibited in support of this doctrine, in the preceding pages, that Campbell, and Doddridge, and Macknight, Presbyterian Divines; that Bishops Taylor, Bull, Burnet, Secker, Horsley, Tomline, and other Bishops of the English Church; that Hammond, and Whitby, and Clarke, and Scott, Clergymen, and Sir Peter King, a distinguished Layman of that Church; that Wesley and Clarke, of the Methodist communion; that Bishops Seabury and White, of our own Church; that all these, living in different ages and countries, and of different religious denominations, should have conspired to introduce the papal doctrine of purgatory, will hardly be credited.

The Papal doctrine is, that "some few have before their death so fully cleared up their accounts with the Divine Majesty, and washed away all their stains in the blood of the Lamb, as to go straight to Heaven after death; and that others who die in the guilt of deadly sins, go straight to Hell*." The doctrine set forth in the preceding pages is, that none go to Heaven, or to Hell, (yέεννα, gehenna,) until after the day of judgment. In the interval between death and the resurrection, they are in a state of unchangeable happiness or misery in the place of the departed.

The Papal doctrine is that those who do not die perfectly pure and clean, nor yet under the guilt of unrepented deadly sin, go to Purgatory, where they suffer certain indefinable pains, and the pains of material fire;

^{*} The Catholic Christian instructed, p. 176—a book of standard authority among the Roman Catholics, published by one of their distinguished Bishops, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Chaloner.

until God's justice is satisfied, or they are freed from these pains by the masses said for their souls. These tenets, it must be apparent, are in no degree, sanctioned by the doctrine advanced in the preceding pages, with respect to departed spirits. The eternal destiny of the individual is unchangeably fixed at death. His condition in the place of the departed is an unchangeable condition of happiness or misery, until the day of judgment, when this happiness or misery is consummated in body and soul.

The Papal doctrine with respect to Christ's descent into Hell is, that he went not into the place of departed spirits, as is believed by those who maintain the existence of this place, but into a region called *Limbus Patrum*, to manifest his glory to the holy saints, who had departed before his advent, and to release them from their confinement, and take them to Heaven.

There is thus a total dissimilarity between the Papal doctrine of purgatory and the doctrine of the descent into hell, and the state of the departed, advanced in the preceding pages.

The Sermon of Bishop Bull, (from which Dr. Dod-DRIDGE quotes with approbation *,) in which he establishes this doctrine of a place of departed spirits, contains a refutation of the Papal doctrine of purgatory, and shews the entire difference between it and the doctrine which he advocates of an intermediate state. After exhibiting the faith of the primitive Church on this point, he

observes *. "From what hath been said, it appears, that the doctrine of the distinction of the joys of Paradise, the portion of good souls in that state of separation, from that yet fuller and most complete beatitude of the kingdom of Heaven after the resurrection, consisting in that clearest vision of God, which the holy Scriptures call seeing him face to face, is far from being Popery, as some have ignorantly censured it; for we see it was the current doctrine of the first and purest ages of the Church. that it is so far from being Popery, that it is directly the contrary. For it was the Popish convention at Florence +, that first boldly defined against the sense of the primitive Christians—That those souls, which having contracted the blemish of sin, are either in their bodies or out of them purged from it, do presently go into Heaven, and there clearly behold God himself, one God in three Persons, as he is. And this decree they made, partly to establish their superstition of prayer to the saints deceased, whom they would needs make us believe to see and know all our necessities and concerns in speculo Trinitatis, in the glass of the Trinity, as they call it, and so to be fit objects of our religious invocation; but chiefly to introduce their purgatory, and that the prayers of the ancient Church for the dead might be thought to be founded on a supposition, that the souls of some faithful persons after death, go into a place of grievous torment."

This doctrine of the separate existence of the soul in the place of the departed between death and the resurrection, being expressly revealed, should be an object of faith.

^{*} Bull's ser. Vol. i. p. 114.

- 1. It resolves all doubts with respect to the condition of the soul after her departure from the body, and before her reunion to it at the resurrection. The soul during this period is in a state of consciousness; either enjoying a foretaste of future bliss, or tormented by the anticipated pangs of future woe, after the judgment of the great day.
- 2. It is thus calculated to fill the wicked with dismay. It cuts off the hope of a moment's intermission of torment after death. The worm that never dies immediately begins to gnaw. In the company of spirits wretched like themselves, they dwell in the dark region of the departed, anticipating the summons which uniting them to incorruptible bodies, will bring them to the judgment seat, and also the more dread sentence that will consign them to gehenna, to the hell of torment, the "lake of fire," that "burneth for ever and ever."
- 3. But this doctrine of the place of the departed is full of consolation to the faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus. It assures them that, in the long interval between death and the resurrection, while detained from heaven, they shall not be deprived of a foretaste of its glories. In the bosom of Abraham, in the enjoyment of his society, and of the blessed fellowship of all the departed saints, they shall experience the most exalted delights. "Delivered from the burden of the flesh," their souls shall be with the Lord Jesus, the rays of whose glory sanctify and cheer the paradise of his saints. Here they shall enjoy perpetual peace and felicity; anticipating their "consummation both in body and soul in God's eternal and everlasting glory."

Why then, Christian, shouldest thou fear to die? Thy soul is not, for a moment, to lose that consciousness which is dear to her as her existence. The darkness of death is not, for a moment, to cover thy spirit. The instant thou dost close thine eyes on the world, thy soul opens her joyful vision on the delights of Paradise. And Paradise is but the introduction to that *Heaven*, where, thy whole nature perfected and glorified, thou shalt taste the fulness of joy, and "be for ever with the Lord."

THE END.

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